THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE

1 FADE IN:
CLOSE SHOT OF FRANK CHAMBERS

He is talking in a small, dark room to a listener whom we do not see.

Frank (tortured, pleading)
Now? Now all I care about is — Cora. Cora — does she know — does she understand. That's all I want to know now. Cora. Cora!

(with a great effort he forces himself back to the business at hand)
I'd better start with the day I first laid eyes on her. Nothing unusual about that day. I was hitch-hiking from San Francisco down to — well, San Diego, I guess.

DISSOLVE TO:

2 TWIN OAKS TAVERN - EXT.

Attractive, though not well kept up. A remodeled house perhaps. It is, however, fairly clean and bright, and drenched in California summer sunshine.

Frank's Voice (on sound track)
It was on a side road outside Los Angeles. There was the lunch room part, and the house part, and the filling station.

By now we have PANNED OVER to show the two-lane highway. Around a curve in the road comes a medium sized blue coupe going probably fifty miles an hour headed toward the CAMERA.

Frank's Voice (on sound track)
A half hour earlier I'd thumbed a ride in a blue coupe --

Suddenly, exactly opposite the Twin Oaks Tavern, the coupe's brakes are jammed on suddenly and it comes to a screeching stop, skidding slightly so that it stands diagonally across the center stripe.

3 CLOSE SHOT

Coupe door opens and out climbs Frank Chambers. He's carelessly dressed in a tweedish coat and well-worn trousers, a shirt with a collar, but no tie. He has a small worn bag not much larger than a briefcase. Back of the coupe's wheel is a man named Kyle Sackett, a young clean-cut individual, nicely dressed.

CONTINUED:

3 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (as he climbs out)
Well, so long, mister. Thanks for the ride, the three cigarettes, and for — not laughing at my theories on life.

Sackett (with a nice smile)
But you broke off right in the middle of a sentence. Why do you keep looking for "new places, new people, new ideas?"

Frank (with a twinkle)
Well, I've never liked any job I've ever had - and maybe the next one is the one I've always been looking for.

Sackett nods with inner understanding.

Sackett (little drily)
Not worried about your — future?

Frank (simply)
I've got plenty of time — besides, maybe my future starts right now —

He points off. (GET INSERT of crude sign hanging on pump reading "MAN WANTED")

Sackett (noting sign)
Well, good luck. Maybe I'll be seeing you again. I live nearby.

Frank (smiling)
I never say "I'll be seeing you." I always say just "Thanks for the ride."

Frank turns away toward the Twin Oaks. Just as Sackett throws the car in gear, Frank turns to see:

4 LONG SHOT - EXT. TWIN OAKS

A state motorcycle cop is approaching sounding his siren, pulls up alongside the coupe, the cop climbing off his machine ominously.

5 MED. SHOT

Frank watches with grim-humored interest as the cop, Blair, pokes his head belligerently in the coupe's window. Then Frank reacts as the cop withdraws somewhat hastily, throws a leg over his motorcycle, disgruntled, and the blue coupe drives triumphantly off. The CAMERA MOVES UP as Frank, with curiosity, approaches the cop.

Frank (a wise guy)
Oh, he slipped you something, hunh?

CONTINUED

5 CONTINUED (2

Blair (deadpan)
Right, brother! I stick my head in the window, very tough, and I say, "Parking in the middle of the highway, hunh? Who do you think you are?" and he slips me three little words:

Frank (blinking)
Three little words?

Blair (suddenly grim)
Yeah. He says, "I'm the District Attorney."
(Frank reacts)
Yeah. The D.A. himself. Lives down the road a ways.

The cop jams on the starter and the motorcycle whirls around and goes off as it came, while Frank, with some amusement, crosses toward the Twin Oaks. Suddenly out of the lunch room bursts Nick Smith, the proprietor. He is in his early forties, a nice, easy-going, not too bright man, who is amusingly futile and frustrated. He hurries up to Frank eagerly, meeting him just in front of the "MAN WANTED" sign on the pump.

Nick (eagerly)
Good morning, my friend. I'll tell you all about the job. All you do is help around the place.

Frank (stalling)
Right now I've got a certain trouble that keeps me from working.

Nick (staring in disbelief)
But you look healthy.

Frank (straight-faced)
It's my feet. They keep itching for me to go places.
(bargaining)
But it's a nice place -- how's your food?

Nick immediately takes Frank by the arm and steers him toward the lunch room entrance.

Nick (meanwhile selling)
I'll give you a wonderful hamburger free of charge, just to show you what kind of food goes with the job.
(businesslike)
You understand automobiles?

Frank (playing his game)
I'm a born mechanic.

Nick pulls open the door and they enter the lunchroom.

6 INT. LUNCH ROOM

There's a counter, a door to the kitchen, another door that opens into the living quarters of the house. Nick ushers Frank in to a seat at the counter. CONTINUED:

6 CONTINUED (2)

Nick

Sit down.

(Nick bustles around behind the counter and prepares a hamburger, talking meanwhile)

The job don't pay all the money in the world, but you've got no expenses, you sleep and eat right here, a good bed, a box spring and mattress, fresh air and sunshine. Boy! You'll be <u>living</u>!

Frank (stalling)

Suppose I try it out for a couple of days --

By this time Nick has the hamburger on the fire, but even as he grins, he stiffens at a repeated toot of a horn from a car outside at the gas pump.

Nick (anxiously)

A customer!

Frank (smiling at his anxiety)

Go ahead. We're not going to make any money in here. I'll watch the hamburger.

Nick (gratefully)

Thanks.

(exits hurriedly)

Don't go away!

Left alone, Frank looks about the place with amused distaste. Then a sound turns him to face the kitchen door. It is a faint tune, characteristic, whistled by someone in the kitchen. Then a sharper sound and the whistling stops suddenly. From within the door an object has fallen on the floor and is rolling toward him. It is an opened lipstick. It rolls practically to Frank's feet. He rises, bends, picks it up and regards it with some interest. Then he looks up at the kitchen door.

7 INT. LUNCH ROOM - CLOSE SHOT

Standing in the kitchen doorway, almost imperiously as she looks at this stranger, is Cora. In her hand is a small mirror and the top of the lipstick case. She is wearing a white playsuit, shorts and a halter, plain white high-heeled pumps. Her blond hair is at this moment, entirely hidden beneath a white turban. She is looking at Frank impassively.

8 INT. LUNCH ROOM - CLOSEUP FRANK

Frank stands and stares at her, the lipstick in his fingers. He looks her over calmly and with challenge. His steady glance is a very vivid appreciation of what he sees. He hesitates a long moment, then holds up the lipstick.

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (quietly)

You dropped this?

9 INT. LUNCH ROOM - CLOSEUP CORA

Cora looks at him steadily.

Cora (quietly)

Thanks.

(with disdain she surveys her face carefully in the little mirror)

10 INT. LUNCH ROOM - CLOSEUP FRANK

Frank's expression does not change. He holds out the lipstick toward her, but does not move, instead expects her to come and get it.

11 INT. LUNCH ROOM - CLOSE UP CORA

Cora turns from her mirror to study Frank, staring at his level glance she suddenly loses the skirmish, walks slowly toward him, takes the lipstick from his fingers.

12 INT. LUNCH ROOM - MED. SHOT

Frank conceals his momentary triumph, but watches her still with the same appraising and appreciative stare. Cora saunters easily over to the kitchen door, pauses there, turns.

Cora (evenly)

Thanks.

She then proceeds to make up her lips, completely and effectively, every gesture saying to Frank, "Take a look. This is not for you." Then easily, triumphantly, she moves into the kitchen and closes the door. Frank stands there a moment and then narrows his eyes. A little whimsical twist flashes across his mouth. He turns with some intention toward the door to the outside. Then he looks quickly behind the counter, vaults it suddenly, takes the smoking hamburger from the fire, neatly deposits it in the garbage can, vaults back and walks out into the yard.

13 EXT. TWIN OAKS TAVERN

THE CAMERA PANS Frank over toward the filling station then PICKS UP Nick nodding a grateful goodbye to the car he has just served with gas. The car pulls away, leaving Nick happily regarding the money he has just taken in. Then Nick turns, suddenly discovers the sign is missing from the pump.

Nick (looking around excitedly)
My sign! Somebody stole my sign!

And then he stops dead short and grins as he sees:

14 EXT. GAS STATION - MED. SHOT

Frank is carrying the sign toward the little burning rubbish pile behind the gas station. He drops the sign into the fire. Into the scene comes Nick running happily.

Nick
That's right. Burn it up!
(turns off toward the house)
Now I'll go tell my wife we've got somebody to help run the place!

Frank (suddenly taken aback)
Your wife?

But Nick is gone. Frank makes a turn back to the rubbish pile and reaches down to pluck the sign from the flames. Then he stops short, shrugs -- it's not his funeral -- and the CAMERA PANS DOWN on the little trash fire as the MAN WANTED SIGN is consumed by the flames.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 - 16 CUT

17 INT. LUNCHROOM - NIGHT

Late at night. The lunchroom is closed, but still ablaze with light, with its chairs and tables thoroughly cleaned up for tomorrow -- save for the counter behind which Frank is working in a now soiled apron. With mild forbearance he is sopping up the top of the counter with a great handful of wet cloth, leaving the counter clean but sopping wet with water. At this moment Nick enters from the kitchen shiny and clean in his street clothes, and deposits on the counter two spick-and-span clean aprons for tomorrow, one of which he demonstrates by opening it out to inspect it, then folding it back in its original creases, all during the following scene.

Nick (as he enters, pleasantly)
Well, the first day wasn't so bad, was it, and it'll be easier tomorrow.

Frank (with a dry shrug)
Another day, another dollar.

Nick (with wry humor)
Only I'm paying you more than a dollar a day. We settled that.
(very friendly)
Well, now that you're an old and trusted employee, suppose I call you Frank, and you call me Nick.

Frank
That's all I can call you — I've never heard your last name.

Nick
It's Smith. Nicholas Smith.
(almost like an introduction)
And my wife is Cora Smith --
(repeating)
Cora. Well, I'll say good night.
(turns toward living room door)
I'm going to do a little work on —
(stops, mildly scaring at floor)
Uh-uh!

Frank (leaning over counter)
What's the trouble?

Nick (apologetic smile)
It's a pin.

Frank (blandly)
See a pin, pick it up, all the day you'll have good luck.

Nick (not too seriously)
But this pin could be bad luck because it's pointing away from me.

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED (2)

Frank looks at him and starts around from behind the counter.

Frank (with skeptic humor)
Wait a minute. You don't believe that stuff, do you?

Nick (a little awkward)
No, of course not — only —

Frank (amused)
You think God Almighty is sitting upstairs looking through a telescope to see if you find a pin, so He can smack you down with a bolt of lightning if it's pointing the wrong way?

Nick (quite taken aback)
But you see here what I do —
(suiting action to words)
I walk around the pin until — now — it's pointing <u>toward</u> me and —
(humorously satisfied)
— that's good luck.

He stoops and picks up the pin and inserts it carefully into the seam of his lapel where we see he has already placed a dozen other pins. Then he smiles at Frank who is looking at him with growing understanding.

Nick (starting for door)
Good night, Frank. I'm going to do some work on the books. I'm positive that butcher in Los Angeles is cheating me.
(he opens the door to the living room, pauses and snaps off an electric switch by it, putting out all the lights in the lunchroom except a small one over the counter, smiles at Frank)
The electric company's making enough money.
(notices the still wet counter)
Frank, you'll wipe the counter off dry, won't you — and everything'll be wonderful.

He exits into the living room leaving the door open six or eight inches. Frank reacts to this revelation of Nick's character, looks down at the counter, wickedly takes the top clean apron, with it mops the counter off beautifully dry, then raises the lid of the garbage can and puts the now soiled apron inside, then comes out from behind the counter, crosses silently to the electric switch and floods the room with light again.

CONTINUED

17 CONTINUED (3)

While there at the slightly open door he again hears the feminine whistle of that quaint little tune. Cautiously he looks through the door opening. Cora comes downstairs in the background and walks to the living room, unaware she is observed. She is wearing a little white sport dress and white pumps, the turban has disappeared and her hair and her whole manner implies she has given special pains to her appearance -- and knows the effort has been successful. She doesn't see that Frank is watching her with appreciation, a couple of feet away from the crack in the door to the lunchroom.

18 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As Cora comes into the living room Nick looks up with genuine appreciation, from where he is sitting at a desk in the far corner with account books and bills before him.

Nick (in a low warm voice)
My, Cora, you're lovely tonight.
(almost pathetically searching for expression)
You look like — like — a beautiful white bird.

Cora stops with a tolerant grim little smile.

Cora
No, darling. I may look very well tonight — in fact I tried to — but Nick, I do not look like a beautiful white bird.

Nick (affectionately)
All right, Cora.
(looks at the dress)
It's a new dress, isn't it?

Cora (with smiling patience)
Only five ninety-five — on the Boulevard.
(she now reveals her purpose, comes close to Nick, lowers her voice with real significance to us)
Nick — this man you hired —

Nick (looking up)
Frank?

Cora (carefully)
If that's his name. Why don't you give him a week's salary and let him go?

Nick (astonished)
A week's pay for nothing?

Cora (very carefully)
We can get along without him. -

18 CONTINUED (2)

Nick (suddenly, warmly)
I know. You're trying to please me, you're thinking of the expense.
(before she can protest)
But he's done a long day's work, and he's working pretty cheap. Why not let's give him a chance?

Cora hesitates, not sure of herself. Nick smiles and nods happily, pats her shoulder and turns back to his bills.

Nick (apologetically)
That butcher —

Cora (agreeing to the change of subject)
He's been charging you U. S. Choice prices for U. S. Good.

Nick (nodding happily)
We'll fix him.

He turns to his bills, Cora stands there for a long moment looking at him, then turns and walks deliberately to the lunchroom door which she pushes suddenly open.

19 INT. LUNCHROOM

Attractive in trousers and shirt open at the neck, is Frank, perched on a chair with his feet high up on one of the lunchroom tables. He is reading a newspaper. As Cora enters he does not move except to turn his eyes over and regard her evenly. Cora stops for a second at this obvious indifference. Then she quietly closes the door, takes a couple of steps forward into the center of the lunchroom.

Cora (coolly)
My husband tells me your name is Frank.
(tautly)
Well, Frank, around here you'll kindly do your reading on your own time.

Frank (easily, not moving)
Your husband — Nick — told me I was through for the day, and I thought he was boss around here.

Cora (coldly)
The best way to get my husband to fire you would be not doing what I tell you to do.

CONTINUED:

13 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (still not moving)
You haven't asked me to do anything yet.

Cora (beginning to burn)
I want all these chairs painted.

Frank (nodding agreeably)
All right.
(turns the page easily and studies it)
I'll look in the paper and maybe I can find a sale on some cheap paint.

Cora (pointedly)
You won't find anything cheap around here.
(insolently points)
Take a look at that cupboard.

Frank solemnly puts down the paper, lowers his feet, crosses to the cupboard, opens the door revealing a large new can of white paint.

Frank (pleasantly)
As my friend Nick would say, "That's wonderful".
(turns back toward his seat)
Next time anybody makes a trip to town, they can pick up a paintbrush.

Cora (triumphantly)
Look on the bottom shelf.

Frank bends down and comes up with a new paintbrush.

Frank (meanwhile)
Now what do you know about that?
(takes paint and brush over to his chair, begins opening paint can, chatting blithely)
Why didn't you start this campaign of rehabilitation before - or were you just waiting for me?

Cora (wickedly)
Nick was saving that paint.

Frank (stirring the paint)
Nick saves a lot of things.

Cora (coldly)
It's none of your business what he saves.

Frank nods pleasantly, begins carelessly to paint the back of the nearest chair.

Frank (meanwhile)
I didn't say it was. Only when I have something, I don't save it.
(he looks at her pointedly, blithely and carelessly painting the back of the chair, but she is silent)

CONTINUED:

19 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (continued)
Why do you want to paint these chairs? They look all right to me.

Cora
(now it comes out impulsively)
Because I want to make something out of this place! I want to make this place into an honest-to-goodness —

She stops short, angry with herself for being taunted into revealing this inner ambition.

Frank (painting blithely)
Aren't we ambitious? We want to make a lot of money so we can buy a lot of pretty clothes --
(very casually he puts down the paintbrush and crosses to face her)
Or maybe we want to put something aside to take care of our husband and us in our old age?

Suddenly he kisses her. She does not move a muscle. When he withdraws his lips, not even her angry expression has changed. He looks at her a long moment and then with no evidence of triumph, he crosses to his chair, sits down and begins to paint the other chair gaily, with fancy strokes and gestures. Then he looks up at her. She is still standing there, but she deliberately takes out her mirror and lipstick, and defiantly and coldly, repairs the damage done to her lips, exits into the living room. The door closes behind her. But Frank is worried about that last look. He wipes the back of his hand across his own lips and finds her lipstick has come off on his hand. He scrubs it off with his handkerchief, and then picks up the brush, hauls the chair forward with his other hand, and paints in bold strokes on the seat of the chair a large crude heart with an arrow piercing it. On this painting the CAMERA MOVES UP CLOSE as we

DISSOLVE TO:

20 INT. DARK ROOM

There seems a little more light on Frank's face now and his internal agony is growing as he talks to the unseen listener.

Frank
She'd managed to make me feel worse than if she'd slapped me in the face. I began to feel like a cheap nobody trying to make a play for a girl who had no use for him. Oh, I had disturbed her too — and I could tell that she hated me for that worst of all. For a couple of weeks, then, she wouldn't look at me or say a word to me if she could help it.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank's Voice (on sound track)
I found myself working like a dog around the place — trying to get tired enough so I could quit thinking about her. Naturally Nick was delighted with the way I worked. I was the best buy he had ever made.

This is a LONG SHOT of the Twin Oaks late at night closed and dark. A stiff breeze is blowing. The trees whip and bend and the decrepit old-style sign, with electric bulbs, is swinging dangerously. Then the CAMERA PANS DOWN AND MOVES OVER to show Frank, walking slowly, thoughtfully along the front. He cannot sleep. He is dressed in a shirt and a pair of old trousers, and his face is very thoughtful as he watches the wind storm. Suddenly the sign whips too far and breaks loose, crashing to the ground, close to Frank who ducks back safely, then studies the wreckage, and looks over to the second story of the house. A light goes on in a window and Nick appears in his pajamas, shaking his head unhappily as he sees that the sign has crashed.

DISSOLVE TO:

21X1 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

CAMERA FOCUSSED on the sign, smashed and leaning against the house as Frank comes past carrying a wind wing. He enters the kitchen door.

22 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Frank enters from outside. He is wearing a smock embroidered TWIN OAKS SERVICE and he carries the windshield wing in his hands. Cora is drying some dishes, herself clad in a white uniform embroidered like Frank's, but the uniform is alluringly cut and becomes Cora thoroughly. Again her hair is completely obscured by the white turban. Frank comes up to the sink, turns on the hot water and starts to scrape a sticker from the windshield wing. Cora looks at him with expressionless face and moves away a little so there could be no contact between them.

Frank (after a moment's silence)
A customer wanted this scrubbed off. Needs hot water.

She ignores him completely.

Frank (without looking up)
I've been trying to figure out a way to get that sign put back.

CONTINUED:

Cora (curtly)
Don't bother.

Frank (shortly)
No bother. All I need is a stepladder.

Cora (forced to talk - curtly)
I don't want the sign put back, Mr. busy-body. I've been trying to get a new sign up there for two years.

Frank (in mild reproof)
Maybe there are some things you don't know how to sell.

She whirls on him, is about to bawl him out, then relaxes at the sound of a footstep as Nick enters from the outside, he too wearing a lettered smock. Oddly enough, both Cora and Frank assume a deliberate innocent casualness.

Nick (to Frank)
Frank, I've been thinking. You must be in love.
(both Cora and Frank conceal a start)
You hardly ate any lunch.
(to Cora blithely)
He doesn't get any letters. I guess his best girl's got a new fellow.

Frank (scrubbing the wind-wing)
It's too hot to eat.
(a knowing look at Cora)
A funny climate you have around here. The harder the wind blows, the hotter it gets.

Nick
We call that wind a Santyana. It comes from the desert.

Frank
Nick, let me take the sedan and I'll run that sign into town and get it fixed.

Cora gives him a sharp look, as if betrayed.

Nick
Take it to the electric company. They fixed it for nothing before.

Frank (shrugging)
Why not? They make a fortune out of that sign every month.

Cora begins to see a light.

Nick (resisting the bait)
Now you're talking like the neon sign salesman.

Frank turns, blandly takes the towel from Cora's hands, starts drying the wind-wing.

22 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (meanwhile)
I know. A neon sign would only burn a quarter as much juice. But that's not the point.

Nick
It isn't?

Frank
No. What's the purpose of a sign around here?

Nick (as Cora listens intently)
To show people where they can get something to eat.

Frank
Not for my money. A sign is supposed to give people an appetite -- and your sign doesn't make me hungry!

Nick conceals his interest oddly, invents an excuse.

Nick
Maybe you're right, but -- I'm a little too busy to think about it now.

He exits rather hurriedly in the living room and Frank turns gloatingly to Cora.

Frank (rubbing it in)
He's hooked. I can sell anything to anybody.

Cora (freezing up)
That's what you think.

She reaches over and grabs a cigarette from a pack on the table, instantly Frank produces a match from his pocket and makes ready to strike it, but her chin goes in the air and she immediately opens a book of matches from the table. Only one match is left. She impatiently strikes it but it bends in the middle. This annoys her further, but Frank has his match lighted and ready and presents it to her cigarette. Sullenly she inhales the smoke. Frank blows out the match, faces her averted eyes quietly and with sincerity.

Frank (in a low voice)
Tell me one thing. How did you ever come to marry him?

Cora (in a fierce whisper)
Is that any of your business?

Frank (quietly)
Maybe.

There is an impatient toot toot from the car outside. Cora quickly picks up the wind-wing and shoves it in Frank's hands with a commanding gesture. Rebuffed for the moment Frank goes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 EXT EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

A smart new neon sign has been installed and the CAMEL PAWS DOWN from it, blinking on and off, toward doorway to the lunchroom. It is late and the whole place is dark, but standing there just inside the open door is Frank and Cora. Once again she is dressed smartly in a brief little white frock. Frank wears worn white flannels and a white shirt. Cora is playing with the switch that snaps on and off the light, her face expressionless, her attitude still unfriendly. Frank leans close to her.

Frank (in a cautious whisper)
Look. Maybe it's none of my business, but what's Nick sore about?

Cora (with gentle sympathy)
He's so crazy about the sign, he's afraid you'll claim it's your idea instead of his.

Frank (confidently)
Watch.

He turns toward the door of the living room.

24 INT. LIVING ROOM

Nick is seated in an armchair, a glass and a bottle of wine beside him, a guitar leaning against the arm. Frank enters and goes up to him.

Frank (warmly)
Well, Nick, I've seen many a sign in my time but that's the daddy of 'em all! I've got to hand it to you.

Nick (with a half smile)
Why, Frank —

Frank
There I was, talking about getting the old one fixed and already you'd seen the neon salesman -- and bingo! A new sign prettier than a Christmas tree!

Nick (rising, extending his hand)
Thanks, Frank.
(wickedly)
Does it make you hungry?

Frank
Thirsty.

Nick (handing over the bottle)
Let's celebrate.

CONTINUED

24 CONTINUED (2)

Frank takes the bottle, finds a glass, and offers it in pantomime to Cora who shakes her head definitely no. Meanwhile Nick has picked up the guitar and begins to strum a tune, leaning against the wall. He plays beautifully for a moment while Frank pours a glass, signals Nick good luck and drinks the wine. Cora is watching, seems nicely anxious to show Nick off.

Cora
Sing something, Nick.

Nick (nodding)
Your favorite?

He begins to play and sing, in a very nice voice, a romantic love song. Engrossed in himself he does not notice that throughout the song Cora and Frank are dodging the implication of the romantic words. Cora keeps her eyes away from Frank. On the other hand Frank keeps looking carefully at her. When the song is over Frank applauds.

Frank
Swell.

Cora (quickly, defensively)
Nick studied for Grand Opera once.

Nick
Thousands of people study for Grand Opera. I did it for ten years, then I found nobody would give me a chance. It's a racket.

(to change the subject he swings the guitar music into a sultry rumba. Despite herself Cora's whole being begins to respond intangibly to the rhythm. Nick sees this and smiles approvingly)

Do a little dance for us, Cora.
(to Frank)
Cora's a wonderful dancer.

Cora has no intention of exhibiting herself in a rumba to Frank.

Cora
I always feel silly dancing alone, but put a record on, Nick, and I'll dance with <u>you</u>.

Nick (in genuine modesty)
Listen to her, Frank. I keep telling her I'm like a lot of smart men, my brains are not in my feet.

Frank (all innocence)
How about me dancing with Mrs. Smith?

Cora turns quickly to object but Nick interrupts.

Nick (pleased)
Go ahead. Go ahead, Cora. I like to <u>watch</u> dancing.

24 CONTINUED (3)

Afraid to reveal her own fears, and Frank moving to take her immediately in his arms, Cora is on the spot. The two young people dance beautifully together, and as Cora discovers this she lets herself go for a minute and the exhibition is a beautiful one indeed. Then Cora becomes too well aware of Frank's arms and body. It is a great temptation, and she tries to fight it. Meanwhile Nick is walking about the room following them like a minstrel, playing his guitar. Suddenly Cora stops short, but Frank does not take his arm from about her.

Cora (curtly)
That's enough. It's no fun bumping into furniture.

Nick (with an idea)
Try it out here --
(indicates open door to dark lunchroom)
Lots of room.

Cora (quickly)
Never mind. I've practically forgotten how to dance.

Nick (pleading)
You're wonderful -- and you know it.

Still strumming the guitar with one hand he reaches the other through the open door, snaps on the switch then hastily snaps it off again.

Nick (grinning)
The electric company makes enough money.

He strikes a gorgeous new chord and nods Cora on. As she hesitates for a second Frank's grasp tightens and he swings her through the doorway into the lunchroom.

25 INT. LUNCHROOM

It is lighted only by the glare through the living room door, and the flashing of the new sign through the panes of glass from outside. We see, incidentally, that all the chairs have been painted white -- and the walls too. In the background Nick leans against the door, playing happily. In the gloom of the lunchroom he cannot see the tension on the faces of Cora and Frank as, completely suited to each other, they go beautifully through the evolutions of the dance. Suddenly Cora stops short again, this time so quickly that she extricates herself from Frank's grasp and steps away from him.

Cora (elaborately)
Whew! Save your strength, Nick. It's too hot to dance.

She turns to the living room door.

27 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Cora comes up to Nick's nondescript sedan parked back by the garage. She opens the door and steps in.

28 INT. NICK'S SEDAN - NIGHT

As Cora steps into the car she sees Frank sitting behind the wheel. He's already in his swimming trunks.

Frank (casually)
Climb in. Nick says it's all right with him if it's all right with you.

Cora looks at him sharply but all guile is gone from his face. He grins at her. So what, she says to herself, confident she can handle any situation. She sits down, stretches out her legs and leans back in the car, friendly but no more than friendly and with a warning look in her eye. Frank accepts this and without saying a word throws the car into gear and it starts off.

DISSOLVE TO:

29 EXT. BEACH - MOONLIGHT

Parked off the road in the background is Nick's sedan; coming down to the water, side by side but silently, are Cora and Frank. She slips out of the polo coat and deposits it and her bath towel on the sand, revealing herself in a white bathing suit, adjusting a white rubber cap on her head. Frank drops an old bathrobe with his bath towel beside hers. He waits a second for her to adjust the cap.

Frank (without ambiguity)
Let's not stay too long. I'd like to do this again, and I wouldn't want to overdo it the first time.

Cora (disarmed)
You won't. You'll find this night air can feel awful cold in a very few minutes.

Showing off a little she walks boldly forward into the water and dives headlong, beautifully, under a big breaker. Frank stands watching, admiring her as she emerges beyond the breaker and swims with clean strong strokes, diving under another breaker. Then Frank, strides into the water, dives under a breaker and is half knocked down. Standing up with an effort he dives into the next wave and gets through it, swims a few strokes out, goes under another breaker, comes out in deeper water and looks ahead for Cora. She is out of sight. Treading water for a second, but without alarm, he looks for her vainly. Suddenly he is jerked down

29 CONTINUED (2)

under water, comes up sputtering to find Cora's head emerging beside his. She of course has yanked him under.

Cora (leering)
Stick to dancing! You're better at it!

Frank (sputtering)
The floor here is a little wet.

Cora
Come on out where it's deep, It's not so rough there -- and don't worry, I'll keep an eye on you!

With a wicked grin she starts swimming away from him and Frank is hard put to it to keep up with her.

DISSOLVE TO:

30 LONG SHOT EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A full beautiful LONG SHOT of the scene of the tiny figures of Frank and Cora emerging from the water and coming up to their robes and towels.

DISSOLVE TO:

31 CLOSE SHOT-EXT. BEACH - MOONLIGHT

Frank and Cora sit on the sand facing a tiny fire that Frank is nursing carefully. She has her polo coat over her shoulders, is drying and warming her legs by sticking them out close to the fire. Meanwhile, her cap off, she dries a few wet strands of hair. Frank has his bath towel around his shoulders, his robe half on. An air of friendship permeates the scene.

Frank
Now that I've got this fire burning, I suppose somebody'll come along and make us put it out.

Cora
No. They don't seem to mind it around here.

Frank
You come from this part of California?

Cora
No.
(eyes him quizzically)
Don't laugh. Iowa.

31 CONTINUED(2)

Frank
Why the "don't laugh?"

Cora
The tired old joke that everybody in Southern California supposed to come from Iowa.

Frank
Did you come here with Nick?

Cora (stiffening a little)
No. I only met Nick four years ago.
(a sharp look)
And the next question you asked before! Remember?

Frank (quietly)
And maybe I knew the answer even then.

Cora (with quiet anger)
Oh sure. A smart little Jenny marries herself into a nice steady business. Well let me tell you something, Mr. Smarty-pants. When I married Nick he only had a couple of hundred dollars. Starting the Twin Oaks was my idea, and if it's making nice money by now, it's as much me as Nick!

Frank (calmly)
That wasn't what I meant.

Cora (curtly)
Then it's still none of your business.
(grudgingly)
But I guess I shouldn't have got so sore in the kitchen the other day.

Frank
Forget it.
(curiously)
How come you're such a good cook?

Cora (pleased, with complete frankness)
I worked for a private family a while, then -- a hash-house in L.A. -- until one night Nick came in for dinner.

Frank (lightly)
And pretty soon you married him.

Cora (squarely)
And on the level about it.

Frank (mildly)
Sounds a little dull.

Cora (flaring up)
To you, it would! From what Nick tells me about your ideas of life!

CONTINUED:

31 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (unperturbed)
I like my ideas about life. They're fun -- and I'd rather have my fun now than when I'm old and rich and retired.

Cora (settling it)
I think you'll end up a fine tramp!

Frank
I don't think you think that at all.
(rising)
Let's go back. I wouldn't want Nick getting any ideas.

Cora (rising)
Nick's never going to have any reason to get any ideas.

She turns on her heel and walks directly toward the car as Frank starts to cover the fire with sand.

DISSOLVE TO:

32 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

The sedan drives quietly in and up to the outside of the garage. The motor stops, Cora gets out and then Frank. She takes a step toward the house then stops and faces Frank, obviously grateful for him not starting anything.

Cora (her eyes twinkling)
Do you like lemon meringue pie?

Frank (taken aback)
I don't know --

Cora
I'll make you some tomorrow.

This is such a genuine gesture of friendship that Frank smiles at her. She smiles back, little-girlish. Suddenly they are flooded with light and turn in surprise to see:

33 EXT. TWIN OAKS - MED. SHOT - NIGHT

Nick, in bathrobe, pajamas and slippers, is standing in the side doorway, his hand coming down from the switch of the big floodlight which he had turned on. As he sees Frank and Cora side by side he gives a little gesture of impatience.

Nick
Oh, it's you, Cora. I heard a car and I thought it was a customer wanting gas.

CONTINUED:

33 CONTINUED (2)

Cora
No, it's us. Were you worried?

Nick (frankly)
No, I didn't expect you back so soon.
(turns back into door)
Goodnight, Frank.

As he disappears into the house he snaps off the flood-light, leaving the place in darkness again.

34 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Try as she will Cora cannot keep her face from reflecting her emotions about Nick. Slowly Frank puts his arms around her, but before he even tries to kiss her, she protests.

Cora
Please don't.

But Frank does kiss her. She is at first unresponsive. Then her arms go up around him, as she answers his kiss. When their lips part she turns quietly and slowly, walking toward the house. Frank noiselessly moves after her.

Frank (in a whisper)
Cora --

But without hesitating, Cora walks on to the side door and enters. A light goes on inside. Frank hurries up to the door.

Frank (in a low whisper)
Cora.

There is no answer. He waits a second. The light goes off. A few second's pause and the light goes on upstairs in Nick and Cora's bedroom. Frank turns away, watches the upstairs window for a minute then walks back toward his own quarters.

DISSOLVE TO:

35 INT. DARK ROOM

From somewhere there seems to be a bit more pale light on Frank's face now as he continues to talk, with heartfelt agony, to his unseen listener.

Frank
The next day we were so busy I hardly had a chance to look at her -- not until the middle of the morning -- there was always a lull about that time --

36 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Mid-morning in the blazing sunshine. Nick's car stands in the driveway. Two nondescript customers' cars parked outside the lunchroom door. Beside the gas pump a gigantic gasoline truck, the driver of which is checking the gas going into the underground tank. Beside him stands Frank in his smock.

Truck Driver (meanwhile)
You like working here?

Frank
So-so.

Truck Driver
Nick's a nice quiet guy, but that wife of his -- she's a card.

Frank (hiding his interest)
What way?

Truck Driver
Oh, pal of mine, Curley, he's given the once-over-lightly to every waitress on the coast -- and one day he looks this Mrs. Smith full in the eye and says "Baby, you know what I'm thinking?"

Frank (with real curiosity)
What did she say?

Truck Driver
She says, "Sure, but you don't know what I'm thinking or you'd lose your appetite for those fried eggs, buttered toast and coffee, thirty-five cents please."

As Frank smiles, pleased, the truck driver has finished with the gas and the hose, scribbles on a receipt blank and holds it out for Frank to sign.

Truck Driver
1150 gallons this week.

Frank
Yeah, business is picking up.

He signs the slip, the truck driver makes his departure as Frank turns to note with satisfaction:

37 EXT. TWIN OAKS - RED. SHOT

Man and woman come out of the lunchroom and drive away in one of the cars. Frank approaches the lunchroom with a distinct purpose of seeing Cora.

38 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

As Frank enters the lunchroom a harmless looking man is finishing his cup of coffee. The customer must be a little awed by Frank's expression for he hastily puts down his cup, hurries over and deposits a dime on the counter, hurrying out. Frank rings up the dime on the cash register and casually steps to the front door and peers out.

39 EXT. TWIN OAKS

No other customers are approaching and the meek man is driving his coupe away.

40 INT. LUNCHROOM

Frank turns away from the door into the kitchen.

41 INT. KITCHEN

Cora is busily at work, her white uniform slightly mussed and obviously straightening up after a run of customers. Frank goes directly up to her.

Frank (quietly)
Nick's just had another brainstorm and drove into town. This time it's the Laundry Service that's cheating him.

He reaches for her but with a very simple and sincere expression Cora holds him off with upraised hand and speaks very humbly.

Cora
Frank -- that question --

Frank (forcing her to say it)
What question?

Cora (slowly)
Why I married Nick.

Frank (gently)
My answer is that Nick came along, at the right time, with a wedding ring.

Cora (gratefully)
A wedding ring was the first thing he mentioned.

Frank (nodding)
And you liked that -- for certain reasons.

CONTINUED:

41 CONTINUED(2)

Cora (in full confession)
You don't know the half of it.
(childlike)
Frank, I hate to say this but I...I...wasn't ever -- homely - so --

Frank (with sympathy)
You must have had to fight off a lot of guys.

Cora (bitterly)
A lot of guys? All the guys!
(with honesty)
I don't especially like the way I look sometimes but I never met a man since I was fourteen who didn't want to give me an argument about it.

Frank (with understanding)
Yeah. By the time Nick came along you were ready to marry anybody who owned a gold watch.

Cora (shakily)
It seemed like the best thing to do -- from my angle -- and as for him — I told him I didn't love him -- I told him.

Frank (with a wise grin)
And he said that'd come in time, but it didn't.

Cora (breaking a little)
I meant to stick by him -- and so --

Frank
So you married him and retired, the undefeated champ.

Cora (in a small voice)
Not a hundred percent undefeated -- not now --

This time she goes into his arms readily but starts suddenly and pulls away as from the lunchroom there comes a loud rattle, as if at the door.

Cora (in fright)
What's that?

Frank (easily)
Sounds like somebody trying to get in.

Cora (in surprise)
Is the door locked?

Frank (steadily)
I must have locked it.

They wait -- a tense tableau. The rattling stops.

Cora
Whoever it was, they went away.
They go into each other's arms again...

42 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

It's afternoon and Cora is fresh and clean in a new uniform and white turban. She's casually counting the cash in the open cash register drawer, suddenly stops, bites her lip in extreme emotion and hurries out the lunchroom door.

43 EXT. TWIN OAKS - THE GAS PUMP

Frank is casually putting in place a gas hose line as Cora comes up with a strained face and tense manner.

Cora (suddenly)
Frank, we're not going to go on like this, are we?

Frank (nodding)
I've been thinking about us going away.

Cora (feverently)
I've been thinking about that ever since I first saw you. Where shall we go?

Frank (in high exultation)
Anywhere'll do! Get your things!

Cora (quickly, deliriously happy)
I'll leave a note for Nick.

Frank (with a big happy grin)
Step on it!

She hurries back into the lunchroom and Frank turns off towards the rear.

DISSOLVE TO:

44 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Frank is waiting with the little bag he brought with him. Cora, beamingly happy, comes out of the lunchroom carrying her small nice suitcase, locks the door, puts the key under the mat, hands the suitcase to Frank.

Cora (a little annoyed)
It's too bad Nick took the car.

CONTINUED

44 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (grimly)
If the car was here, you couldn't take it. Not unless you wanted to spend the first night in jail. Stealing a man's wife, that's nothing, but stealing his car, that's larceny.

Cora's face falls but only for a second, Frank looks at the nice suitcase which bears letters C.S. on it, and he looks at Cora happily to help her regain her glow.

Frank
As Nick would say, it won't cost more than fifty cents to paint out that "S for Smith" and paint in "C for Chambers."
(her smile comes back now and Frank turns her with a nod up the road)
This way — so Nick can't pass us before we pick up a ride.

They start to walk, but as they get in the dust of the road, she looks instinctively down at her clean white pumps. They walk a few steps in silence. A car comes toward them, ships past, blowing dust from which Cora shrinks. But they walk on.

DISSOLVE TO:

45 EXT. ROAD - LONG SHOT

Far in the distance we see the Twin Oaks, in the foreground Cora and Frank walking on, and on. She gives a quick furtive look back at the tavern. Another car heads their way and this time Frank signals for a ride, but the car whips past. More dust, more annoyance from Cora. She looks down at her feet.

46 CLOSEUP CORA'S FEET

Cora's slim white pumps are now definitely dusty and soiled, an oil spot prominent.

47 EXT. ROAD

THE CAMERA MOVES AHEAD of Cora and Frank as they walk along the road. Cora's face wears an odd expression. Furtively she looks back over her shoulder.

48 LONG SHOT ROAD AND TWIN OAKS

This is almost the last sight of the tavern from Cora's viewpoint.

DISSOLVE TO:

49 EXT. ROAD

THE CAMERA MOVES AHEAD OF Cora and Frank. Cora's face is enigmatic at her last look at the Twin Oaks, but Frank, more or less in his element, smiles down at her. A huge truck and trailer comes tearing along at high speed, blows the horn at them violently as it passes close, and brings a little shudder from Cora at her concern over her once pristine white dress and shoes. She looks back again over her shoulder, and when Frank smiles at her, her smile is not too certain.

Frank (lightly)
Not tired already?

Cora (mildly)
A little.

Instantly Frank puts the two bags together at the side of the road.

Frank
Sit down a minute.

Cora does sit down with the beginning of protests showing in her face and manner. A nice looking car drives slowly by. From it a smartly dressed woman laughs rather derisively at the two "hitch-hikers" parked by the road. Cora's temper flares up. She makes a wry face after the car.

Frank (laughing)
Don't get sore. We'll have a lift any minute.

Cora (furiously)
I can't stand having anybody laugh at me.

CONTINUED

Cora (cont'd -- flatly)
Frank, if I divorce Nick, he'll never give me a nickel! He'll keep the Twin Oaks and everything!

Frank (warmly)
What do we care?

Cora (suddenly sharp)
Frank, where are we headed?

Frank (taken aback)
I said "anywhere." What's the difference?

Cora (strained)
Anywhere. Anywhere. Do you know where that is?

Frank (becoming impatient)
Anywhere we choose.

Cora (hardening)
No, it's not! It's the hash-house.

Frank (baffled)
The hash-house?

Cora (rising sharply)
Yes, back to the hash-house for me, and some job like it for you!

Frank (resentfully)
You're certainly figuring the worst of it.

Cora (sharply)
You ought to know the worst of it. When you came to our place you didn't even own a necktie.

Frank (slyly)
You liked me, without a necktie.

Cora (impulsively)
I loved you. I'd love you without even a shirt.
(works on him)
But this road, it doesn't lead anywhere but to some measly job -- for you some parking lot where you wear a smock with "SUPER SERVICE" on the front and "THANK YOU COME AGAIN" on the back!
(piteously appealing)
I'd cry if I saw you in a smock like that.

Frank (in protest)
But I wore one back at the Twin Oaks.

Cora (hotly)
But the Twin Oaks I was building into something -- it could be a swell ... place --
(eagerly)
And other fellows would be wearing the smocks -- and you could be the manager.

Frank (in some disgust)
A fine prospect for me

Cora (contemptuously)
Oh, stop acting! Look at how pleased you were after you painted the chairs in the lunchroom!

Frank (leering)
That was just part of my line.

Cora (vehemently)
No! You liked doing it! How many times have you looked at the new sign and winked at me behind Nick's back, because I never could put it across and you did!

Frank (shrugging)
That Santyana wind storm helped me.

Cora (in straight accusation)
Oh, you're ashamed of being smart and knowing how to do things.
(from her inner soul)
Well, I'm ashamed to be out here begging people for a ride -- a ride that'll take me right back where I started!

Frank (coldly)
You'd rather stay with the Twin Oaks?

Cora (intense)
I want to be somebody. And the Twin Oaks is mine. And if I walk out like this I'll lose all I put in it, and I'll never be anybody!

Frank's face is hard and set. He defiantly picks up the two suitcases. Cora switches suddenly from her fierce mood into her "little girl" effect.

Cora (close to him)
I love you, Frank, and I want you, but not this way -- not starting off like a couple of tramps. I'm going back.

There is quite a pause but Frank's face doesn't change. Eloquently he carries the suitcases across the road to the other side, starts walking back toward the Twin Oaks on the shoulder of the road. Cora's attitude shows that she has won a victory. No longer tired, now eagerly, she catches up with him. She stamps the dust off her white pumps, brushes her white skirt, secretly triumphant, eyeing Frank as if she knows she's got him licked from now on. She smiles a little to herself and we must begin to worry about Frank. Then suddenly her expression changes from satisfaction to terror.

Cora (stopping sharply)
Frank!

Frank (ice cold)
What's the matter now?

CONTINUED:

Cora
The note I left for Nick! If he gets home before we do --

Frank (anxiously)
Where'd you leave it?

Cora
In the cash register!

Frank (with a bitter laugh)
The first place he'll look.

Cora (looking about desperately)
Here comes a bus! You've got some money, Frank!

As Frank signals the approaching small local bus ... it puts on the brakes,

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

The bus pulls up and stops. Cora gets out first and hurries to the lunchroom door, followed more slowly by Frank carrying the two bags and obviously in a state of worried indecision.

51 EXT. TWIN OAKS - MED. SHOT

Cora takes the key from its hiding place, opens the lunchroom door, hurries in, while Frank approaches.

52 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Cora runs at once to the cash register, presses the "no sale" key and yanks her note from the opening drawer. With a gasp of relief she sits down heavily in one of the chairs. Meanwhile Frank enters, puts down the two bags, walks coldly up to Cora and takes the note. His face softens as he reads it for it is obviously full of her love for him. Then his face hardens and he walks back of the counter, tearing the note into tiny pieces which he pokes down with the debris in the garbage can. Then, ignoring Cora, he crosses to the suitcases, bends to pick up his own. Meanwhile Cora has turned her back on him deliberately and is looking out the window. Suddenly she gives a shrill cry.

CONTINUED:

52 CONTINUED (2)

Cora
Frank!

He hurries over beside her and looks out.

53 EXT. TWIN OAKS AND ROAD

Nick, driving the sedan, is coming along the road with the car swerving dangerously. He is drunk.

54 INT. LUNCHROOM

Cora (frightened)
It's Nick!

Frank
He's either drunk or he's crazy!
(involuntarily)
Look out!

Cora (shrieking)
Nick!

56 EXT. TWIN OAKS AND ROAD

Nick, trying to swerve around a slow-moving car, is almost hit by a big diesel freight truck which has to swing violently out to keep from crushing him. Nick's coupe disappears for a second amid the screech of brakes and the blowing of horns. We hold on the shot until the big truck and trailer passes and Nick's car becomes visible again, stalled in the middle of the road. Nick starts the motor again and turns into the station.

56 INT. LUNCHROOM

Frank
Whew! That was close!
(half under his breath)
I wish he'd get that plastered some night and drive off a cliff!

Cora gives a furtive start and carefully composes her face.

Cora (oddly)
You don't mean that. You were -- joking.

CONTINUED:

56 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (half afraid)
Sure -- I was -- joking.

Cora (a look in her eye)
Of course you were joking. Of course.

but a seed has been planted in her mind, and without Frank really knowing it, in his. Cora gives a quick look at her dirty shoes.

Cora
I better change, quick!

She hurries out through the living room and upstairs just as Nick comes in the front door, carrying a large soft package tied with string. He confronts Frank, who is in quite a state of mind.

Nick (entering happily)
Don't look now, but I'm a little high! And did I fix those laundry people and make 'em like it! Frank, I even made 'em pay for the beers.

Frank (shortly)
Why don't you jump under a cold shower?

Nick (agreeably)
I'm going to, Frank -- 'cause I'm not only a little high, I'm higher than a kite!
(he stops short, stares at Frank's street clothes and Frank suddenly realizes he needs a good explanation quick)
What's the idea of your good clothes?
(really worried)
You aren't going to quit on me?
(almost pleading)
What's wrong, Frank? Don't you like the food — or maybe you and I could get together on a couple of more —
(he spies the two forgotten suitcases and there is a quick transition to suspicion)
What's the big idea of the <u>suitcases</u>?

Frank (caught short)
Take it easy, Nick —

Nick
What were you <u>stealing</u> in those suitcases?

Frank (sweating inwardly)
Now, wait a minute —

Nick (his rage building)
I might've known! I take in a hobo off the road, hungry, and the minute my back is turned he <u>rots</u> me!

CONTINUED:

56 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (furiously)
I'm no thief!

Nick (with finality)
You can prove that to me -- open up these suitcases!

There is a tableau as Frank realizes what would happen if Cora's personal belongings were found in her suitcase. The tension is broken by the sound of a woman's high heels clicking down the stairs.

57 INT. LIVING ROOM

A CLOSE SHOT reveals Cora's feet and legs as she comes down the stairs, her soiled pumps exchanged for clean white ones, her dusty dress replaced by a crisp white uniform. She walks directly through the living room toward the lunchroom and the two men.

58 INT. LUNCHROOM

Cora (as she comes into sight blithely)
What's the argument? What are you two boys making faces at each other about?

Nick
He's a thief, Cora. Look at these suitcases. I just got here in time.

Cora (with broad affection)
You're crazy, Nick. Frank's not a thief. All of a sudden this afternoon he got an attack of road fever, said his feet were itching for a new place. He came in to say goodbye with his bag packed.

Nick (unmoved)
With two bags packed, you mean, and the other one full of our stuff.

Cora (gaily, affectionately)
You've had too much beer. Sure, the other one was our suitcase, but Frank's bought some new things since he's been here, and I told him he could have that bag for the three days pay he had coming.

It's impossible for poor Nick to doubt her blithe smiling patronizing argument.

Nick (in admiration)
That wasn't a bad bargain, Cora.
(to Frank)
I'm sorry, Frank.

CONTINUED...

55 CONTINUED (2)

Nick (cont'd)
(now anxious again)
Look here, my boy. That road fever's never going to get you anywhere —

Cora (gaily)
Oh, that's all settled.
(Frank gives her a quick look)
Frank's road fever wasn't a very serious attack. He forgot all about it as soon as I promised you'd pay him three dollars more a week.

Nick (with only a slight wince)
Good girl.
(grins at Frank)
Now, if I'm really smart, I'll keep my big mouth shut and go upstairs and take that shower.

He winks a broad drunken wink at Frank, whose face is still enigmatic. Then Nick walks a little unsteadily through to the living room, the string around his big package catching on the doorknob and breaking. A dozen clean towels slide out onto the floor. He stops.

Cora (quickly)
I'll pick them up.

Nick (grandiosely)
If they get dirty, what's the difference? I got 'em washed free!

Still holding the remnants of the paper and string, he moves through the living room and upstairs with Frank and Cora both watching him. Then Cora turns to face Frank. Without a word, she picks up Frank's suitcase, holds it out to him, and watches coolly while he fights a fierce internal struggle in himself, never raising a hand to take the suitcase. Finally he makes a decision, takes the suitcase from her hand, puts it firmly on the floor, but when he would reach out for her, she quickly moves away, indicating the danger of Nick's presence upstairs. Then, secure in her knowledge she has Frank under control, she moves off to the kitchen. Frank's battle is lost, and he probably suspects it. He picks up his suitcase and turns toward the rear of the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

58-60 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - LONG SHOT - MOONLIGHT

Nick's sedan is parked in the spot where it was parked before. But only Frank comes out of the water, impatiently gives himself a quick wipe with his towel, obviously under great mental stress. He puts the towel around his shoulders, yanks on the bathrobe and climbs into the coupe.

DISSOLVE TO:

61 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

As Frank drives the sedan in to park it, as before, near the garage, he hears the sound of Nick's voice or guitar, singing a beautiful romantic song from within the lighted living room. Frank is beginning to suffer rather keenly under the circumstances. He walks noiselessly to the living room window.

62 INT. LIVING ROOM THROUGH WINDOW

Frank peers in. Nick is in his armchair playing and singing; across the room, Cora, in white dress, with hair well done, is lounging out on a sofa, idly whitening a pair of her pumps.

63 CLOSEUP - LIVING ROOM WINDOW

Frank can't restrain himself. Carefully craning his neck, he looks in until he attracts Cora's attention.

64 INT. LIVING ROOM

Cora, looking past Nick, sees Frank's anxious face in the window. Her eyes widen slightly without invitation.

65 CLOSEUP AT WINDOW

Frank makes a furtive signal for Cora to come out.

66 INT. LIVING ROOM

Imperceptibly Cora shakes her head no, cool and alo and doubly seductive. Frank's invitation is r pea more anxiously but Cora again indicates no and lowe her eyes to the white pump which she examines meticulously.

67 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Frank turns from the window biting his lip. He's pretty well under the spell of Cora now and he decides to do something that shows itself as being almost petulant. He turns and walks noisily up to the dark lunchroom entrance. He makes sure he is heard as he opens the door and enters.

68 INT. LIVING ROOM

Frank comes in, making a not. very successful effort to be calm and casual. Nick puts down the guitar and greets him cordially, while Cora pays no attention.

Nick (which stops Frank)
Hello there, Frank. You didn't stay long. Water too cold?

Frank (feigning enthusiasm)
No, it couldn't have been better.
(looks at Cora and can't resist)
You've been missing a lot of fun lately.

Nick (quickly)
Tonight there's a special reason. I told her there was a present coming out from L.A.

Cora (too willingly)
And it just arrived.

Frank (hanging on)
Oh -- a present, hunh?

Cora (calmly)
A nightgown.

Nick (enthusiastically)
I ordered it from a newspaper that day I out-smarted the laundry service.

68 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (deliberately)
Want to see it?

Without waiting for an answer she slips the cover from the box and holds out at arms length a lovely transparent nightgown.

Nick
Isn't that a wonderful nightgown?

Frank pretends to look at it casually and then in all innocence Cora holds the nightgown up against herself, her wholly innocent eyes on poor Frank.

Nick (with a rueful grin)
I wish I could stop remembering that it represents the gross profit on six hundred hamburgers!

Frank (without enthusiasm)
What do you care? Business is terrific lately, isn't it? Goodnight.

He exits through the hall past the stairway.

69 INT. BACK HALL

This is the rear narrow hall that leads back to Frank's bedroom in the side wing. Frank comes miserably along, puts his hand on the knob of his door, suddenly decides on a stratagem, opens the door noisily, and closes it again, while he poises himself to listen, overhearing Nick and Cora.

70 INT. LIVING ROOM

Nick (facing Cora, in a low voice)
There's something funny about Frank lately.

Cora (wide-eyed)
I hadn't noticed.

Nick
Didn't you notice at dinner last night?
(firmly)
A man can't work right if he's hungry.

Cora (a little sharply)
There were more fried potatoes on the stove. Couldn't he have reached for them?

Nick (shaking his head)
Well, you know all the trouble we've had keeping help.

70 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (crisply)
After he got the fried potatoes he didn't want them.

Nick (changing the subject)
All right --
(his voice grows warmer)
You really like my present, Cora?

Cora
You know I do.

Nick (in a low voice)
The minute I looked at the picture in the ad, I couldn't wait until I got it for you.

71 INT. BACK HALL - CLOSEUP FRANK

This is a closeup of Frank overhearing the conversation of the previous scene, and reacting thereto. He is baffled and tantalized -- but as he overhears Nick's last speech, he can't take anymore and so he swiftly and soundlessly opens the door of his bedroom and steps in.

72 INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM

A neat small room like a servant's room. Frank comes in, drops his towel. His mind is in a turmoil. Then, slowly and in great confusion he starts suddenly as he hears the faint turn of the doorknob, whirls about to face Cora who opens the door, slips in, closes the door without a sound. She puts her finger to her lips and comes up close to Frank, dropping the mask she has been wearing.

NOTE: This scene is of course played in tense whispers.

Cora (helplessly)
What are we going to do?

Frank (still hurt)
That's <u>great</u>, coming from you, after high-hatting me the way you have.

Cora (pleading)
What else could I do?
(from the bottom of her heart)
Oh, Frank -- Frank -- if I'd only met you first --

Frank (beginning to weaken)
Well?

Almost pathetically Cora takes Frank's hand in both of

72 CONTINUED (2)

hers, twists it, desperately.

Cora (brokenly)
Frank — do you love me?

Frank (very slowly)
Yes —

Cora (working on him)
Do you love me so much that not anything else matters?

Frank (fervently)
Yes.

Cora (as if far away)
There's — there's one thing we could do that'd fix up everything for us.

Frank (ironic)
What? Pray for something to happen to Nick?

Cora (looking away)
Something — like — that.

Frank (getting it)
Cora!

Cora (quickly)
You suggested it yourself once, didn't you?

72 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (backing away from it)
I -- I was only joking --

Cora
Were you?

Frank (less firmly)
Yes, I was.

Cora
Or had you started to think about it a little?

Frank (now on the defensive)
Maybe I said it but I didn't really mean it.

Cora (taking charge)
Well, I say it again now, and I do mean it.

Frank (under his breath)
Cora!

Cora (rapidly impassioned)
Listen to me, Frank! I'm not what you think I am! I want to keep this place, and work hard, and be something, that's all!

(choking up)
But you can't do it without love -- do you know that, Frank? Anyway, a woman can't! I've made a big mistake in my life, and I've got to be this way just once to fix it!

Frank (slowly)
They hang you for that.

Cora
Not if you do it right. You're smart, Frank, you'll think of a way. Plenty of men have.

Frank (weakly)
He never did anything to me.

Cora (in high gear)
But can't you see how happy you and I would be, together here -- without him?

Frank (after a deep breath)
You talk as if that would make it all right.

Cora
Who's going to know if it's all right or not but you and me?

Frank (dully)
You and me.

Cora
But that's it! That's all that matters, isn't it?

CONTINUED

72 CONTINUED (4)

Frank (in last protest)
Do you love me, Cora?

Cora
That's why you've got to help me! It's because I love you.

Frank (he is sold)
I guess you do. You couldn't ever get me to say yes to a thing like this if you didn't.

She smiles at him, her pleased "little girl" smile-- and with supreme confidence in his help, she walks to the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 THE DARK LITTLE ROOM

Again there seems a little more light on Frank's face, tortured by his memories.

Frank (remembering)
I never will forget how she looked at that moment -- her eyes were shining like two blue stars -- she never seemed so young and innocent in her life --
(forces himself back to the story)
I guess she worked out the details, but the idea was mine. I got it from an article in a magazine that said most serious accidents happen right in people's homes -- mostly in their own bathtubs --

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank is searching about for a possible weapon. His arm knocks over a jar of discarded ball-bearings, and suddenly his eyes light up with an idea. Hurriedly he dumps some spare parts out of an old sugar bag.

DISSOLVE TO:

75 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

The place is closed, the only lights are in Nick and Cora's bedroom and the kitchen. Frank furtively crosses to the kitchen door and enters.

72 CONTINUED (4) Alternate

Frank (in last protest)
Do you love me, Cora?

Cora
That's why you've got to help me! It's because I love you.

Frank (he is sold)
I guess you do. You couldn't ever get me to say yes to a thing like this if you didn't.

She gives him her "little girl" smile.

Cora (in a whisper)
Frank — kiss me — gently — little soft kisses —

He kisses her twice, gently and tenderly and then she walks slowly out, and upstairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

73 THE DARK LITTLE ROOM

Again there seems a little more light on Frank's face, tortured by his memories.

Frank (remembering them)
Little soft kisses — I'd never even thought about kisses like that before — her eyes were shining up at me like two blue stars — she never looked so young and innocent in her life —

(forces himself back to the story)
I guess she worked out the details, but the idea was mine. I got it from an article in a magazine that said most serious accidents happen right in people's homes — mostly in their own bathtubs —

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank is searching about for a possible weapon. His [illegible] knocks over a jar of discarded ball-bearings, and [illegible] ly his eyes light up with an idea. Hurriedly he [illegible] some spare parts out of an old sugar bag.

DISSOLVE TO:

75 EXT. [illegible] - [illegible]

The [illegible] Cora's bedroom and the kitchen. Frank furtively [illegible] to the kitchen door and enters.

76 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cora is in her working shirts outfit, delicately pressing out some filmy underwear. As Frank comes in she stiffens. They face each other closely and talk in tight little whispers, both showing the growing strain. Frank puts down the filled sugar bag on the ironing board and Cora looks at it with strange fascination.

Frank (looking at ceiling)
Will you be able to hear the bathtub water running from down here?

Cora (looking at the weapon)
You can't help hearing it -- besides, he always starts singing the minute he turns on the water.

Frank (right in her ear)
We're going to sink or swim on how we'll tell our story.

Cora (full at him)
I won't miss.
(reciting, but getting jittery)
Nick was taking his bath. You were outside wiping off the car. I was ironing in the kitchen. All of a sudden I noticed some water dripping down from the ceiling —

Frank (nervously)
Maybe we'd better say you —

Cora (cutting in sharply)
Don't change a word of it! We've got it all set! And I know it backwards!

Frank (nervous himself)
All right, all right!
(rapidly)
Be sure he's in the tub when you go in, and be sure to mention it's for clean towels, and when he isn't looking —

His eyes move over to the weapon, and Cora's eyes fix on it a long moment, nodding faintly to herself as her mind grows with the grim and necessary determination.

Frank (reassured himself now)
Then what do you do?

Cora (glib but jittery)
Then I lock the door, I make sure the water's running, I step out the window and down the stepladder —

Frank (cutting in)
And put the stepladder back in the shed! We're sunk if anybody sees that stepladder!

Cora (fearfully)
And don't you move one inch away from the car, in case anybody comes along!

76 CONTINUED (2) 47

Frank
Don't worry. If I give the signal on the horn, you call everything off, pronto!

Cora (herself again)
Nobody ever stops here when the lights are all out in front.

Frank (his last gasp)
Cora -- don't you think it might be better if I -- if I did it?

Cora (sharply)
We've settled that a dozen times. If I go in there he won't pay any attention to me.

There is the sudden sound of water faucets being turned on upstairs and simultaneously Mick's voice is heard singing. Frank and Cora look sharply at the ceiling, brace each other, exchange encouraging glances, and Frank goes out the kitchen door while Cora resumes ironing.

77 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank comes out the kitchen door, slips swiftly around in the darkness, takes a stepladder from within a small shed and noiselessly props it up underneath the flat roof above which is the lighted bathroom window, through which we hear Mick's voice. Registered plainly here near the top of the ladder is an old-fashioned electric fuse box at which point the electric supply wires enter the building. Then Frank hurries toward the front, comes up to Mick's sedan which is parked in a position to command the road and the entrance. Frank picks up a rag and begins wiping off the sedan. From here he can see the lighted bathroom window and Cora ironing through the kitchen window, but the little roof and ladder are barely visible in the gloom.

78 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT - CLOSE SHOT

Frank wiping off the sedan with his furtive eye covering all directions. Suddenly he stiffens with suspense

79 EXT. TWIN OAKS AND ROAD - NIGHT

A big truck comes around the curve but it does not slow down to stop.

80 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank has his hand ready to push the horn button but relaxes as the truck goes by. He turns and looks toward the kitchen.

81 EXT. KITCHEN WINDOW

Cora is seen to be working calmly, from Frank's viewpoint. Then she is seen to cautiously leave the room.

82 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank hears a couple of cars coming, puts his hand ready on the horn button, but the cars go by and again he is relieved. Then he hears a faint sound and turns to look toward the ladder.

83 EXT. ROOF AND LADDER - NIGHT

Something is moving back by the ladder, which is gradually revealed to be, faintly but unmistakably, a cat at the foot of the ladder.

84 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT - MED. SHOT

Again Frank takes his hand from the horn button, looks over at the kitchen window, sees Cora is gone! He runs a dozen quick steps toward the ladder, pauses and picks up a stone which he hurls into the darkness in the direction of the ladder. Then he hurries back toward the car, tense suddenly as a state motorcycle officer comes along the road and whirls in, stopping his motorcycle beside the sedan and between Frank and it, cutting Frank off from the horn button. Frank stiffens with

CONTINUED:

84 CONTINUED (2)

suspense, comes up to the motorcycle cop with assumed nonchalance. The cop shuts off his motor and turns his face around revealing himself to be Officer Blair.

Blair (recognizing Frank)
That your car?

Frank
Belongs to the fellow I work for.

Blair (looking again)
Oh, hello! So it does, so it does. Okay. Just checking up.

About to start his engine again he sees and hears something in the darkness and Frank's heart sinks as Blair stares.

Blair
What's that?

Frank
What's what?

By now Blair has produced his flashlight and focuses it off scene.

85 EXT: TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

The flashlight beam hits the ladder and discloses the cat climbing quaintly up from the second to the third rung.

86 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank is in an agony of suspense and itching to get to the horn button.

Blair (laughing)
Well look at that!

Frank (stalling)
What is it?

Blair (holding beam on cat)
That doggone cat, going up that stepladder!
(laughs, snaps off light)

CONTINUED:

36 CONTINUED (2)

Blair (cont'd)
I like cats--- always up to something. . . . .

He starts his engine and whirls off. Frank waits a few seconds and then dives for the sedan to push the horn but just before his hand hits the button he is stopped dead short.

27 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

There is a flash of fire from the vicinity of the ladder, obviously from the fuse box there. The lights in the Twin Oaks go out.

Cora's Voice (screaming)
Frank! Frank!

Frank turns and runs toward the kitchen door.

28 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frank runs in, breathing heavily, stumbling over things. We hear somebody running downstairs.

Cora (screaming)
Frank! Frank!

She runs in, gasping, sobbing, screaming frantically. Frank grabs her.

Frank (in a savage whisper)
Shut up! Shut up! Are you crazy, screaming like that? Did you do it?

Cora (hysterical)
What happened? The lights went out!

Frank (hurriedly)
It was a cat -- a fool cat jumped on the wires and blew out everything!
(shakes her violently to calm her)
Cora! Did you do it?

Cora (between sobs)
Yes -- I did -- but before I could do anything else the lights went out -- he's -- he's unconscious -- but he's breathing --

Frank
Did he see you do it?

CONTINUED:

88 CONTINUED (2)

Cora

I don't know!

Frank (with sudden fierce decision)

We've got to bring him to!

(she gives a little scream -- he talks on savagely)

Listen, you little fool! There was a State cop out there and he saw that stepladder.

Cora (hysterical again)

Frank! Mick mustn't come to!

Frank

He's got to. If he dies, we're sunk. That cop saw the stepladder! If he dies, they'll know! If he dies, they've got us!

(he whirls to the lunchroom door)

I'll get him out of there! You phone for a doctor!

But she turns and runs after him with another little sobbing scream.

89 INT. LUNCHROOM - NIGHT

Cora runs in after Frank and seizes him.

Cora (wildly)

But suppose he saw me? What's he going to say?

He grabs her again by the arms.

Frank

Get on that phone and call a doctor!

He shoves her over toward the phone on the end of the lunch counter then ducks around behind the lunch counter himself, searching desperately until he comes up with a candle and a book of matches. Meanwhile Cora is at the phone.

Cora (into phone)

Operator! Get me a doctor -- any doctor -- quick -- there's been an accident!

(a pause then frantically)

I don't want an ambulance! I want a doctor!

(pause, Frank is lighting the candle, then she hangs up and turns to him)

They're sending an ambulance!

Meanwhile Frank, shielding the candle flare, runs through the living room door toward the stairs in the background. Both freeze for a second at the sound of a motorcycle. Cora runs to the window.

90 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Blair, the motorcycle cop, rides furiously in and up to the front door.

DISSOLVE TO:

91 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Frank and Cora are waiting outside the door of a room, both staring at the door grimly. Behind them, around the corner of the corridor comes Blair, the State motorcycle cop, leading Sackett, the District Attorney. Blair indicates the couple and goes away. Sackett comes forward casually and stops beside Frank and Cora. They look up and Frank recognizes Sackett with a start.

Sackett (recognizing Frank)
Oh, so it's you.

Frank (quickly)
The boss -- Mr. Smith -- he had an accident.

Sackett
So I heard.
(to Cora)
This is Mrs. Smith, isn't it?

Cora
Yes.

Frank (to Cora)
He's the District Attorney, Mrs. Smith. He lives near your place.

Sackett (nodding)
My name's Sackett.

Cora
How do you do, Mr. Sackett.

CONTINUED:

91 CONTINUED (2)

Sackett
What happened?

Cora (as Frank watches her furtively)
I -- I went in there -- in the bathroom, I mean, to get a towels----

Sackett
He was in there?

Cora
Just standing up in the tub -- all of a sudden there was a big flash of fire and a terrible noise and the lights went out all over the house -- I heard him fall -- but it was all dark, so I --

She is stopped as a nurse opens the door of the room.

Nurse
The doctor thinks you'd better come in now.

Cora pulls herself together and enters, followed by the equally disturbed Frank. Unobtrusively Sackett follows them.

92 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Nick is motionless, with eyes closed, in the bed. A doctor is standing at the foot, as Cora, Frank and Sackett enter.

Doctor (to Cora in a low voice)
He seems to be coming back to consciousness now --

Cora (cutting in)
Doctor, is he going to --

Doctor (professionally)
I'm afraid I can't make any promises. That's why I called you in.

He motions her over to the bedside as Frank and Sackett watch closely from the foot of the bed. Cora bends over Nick with great simple solicitude, in her "little girl" mood. Slowly Nick opens his eyes and looks full at her apparently without recognition.

Cora (whispering)
You feel better now, Nick?
(tableau of utter stillness as Nick's expression never changes)
Don't you know your own wife? It's me, Cora. And aren't you ashamed of yourself, falling down in the bathtub like a little boy, just because the lights went out?

NOTE: SCENES 94, 95

In Scene 94 Frank does not drive the car away but holds it there a moment while he turns up the window, a furtive eye on Sackett and Blair as they exit from the hospital. We go right ahead with the first 4/ speeches of Scene 95, down to and <u>including</u> Frank's words, "That's what we got to start figuring on right now." He then drives off and we will CUT DIRECT TO a FULL SHOT, made on location, of Nick's sedan driving away from the hospital. This will DISSOLVE TO the present process shot inside Nick's sedan, on the road near the Twin Oaks, as Frank looks around behind and sees the motorcycle cop and the District Attorney's car coming into sight around a curve in the far background, going straight into Frank's words "I thought so. There's that cop, etc..." and continue with the balance of scene 95 as already shot.

92 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (cont'd)
(No move from Nick. To everybody's great anxiety)
Aren't you going to speak to me?

Nick strains to say something but can't say it. At a nod from the doctor the nurse begins to fan him. Cora takes hold of his hand and smooths it gently. Nick's eyes close and remain closed for a long suspenseful moment. Then slowly his lips move and everyone bends closer to hear his words.

Nick (in a thin strained voice)
Everything went dark -- I couldn't see----what happened?

The doctor gives a quick look at Nick, straightens up and nods Sackett and Frank from the room. Cora resumes stroking Nick's hand and watching with terrific anxiety as Frank and Sackett exit.

DISSOLVE TO:

93 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAWN

A side driveway entrance of the hospital. Nick's sedan is parked there right at the very steps of the door. Near it, carelessly, are Sackett's car and Blair's motorcycle. Frank is seated behind the wheel of Nick's car fretting and fuming as he waits. Then the door opens and Cora comes out alone. She hurries quickly to the car and climbs in.

94 NICK'S SEDAN CLOSE SHOT

Frank signals Cora for silence as he starts the motor, then as he is about to shift into gear, Sackett and Blair come out, each going casually to his vehicle. Frank notes this with alarm. Assuming an air of a faithful employee solicitous over his employer's wife he turns up the window of the car beside Cora and drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

95 INT. NICK'S SEDAN - PROCESS - DAWN

The background must be shot so as to contain first a vague suspicion then the proof that Blair's motorcycle is behind them, followed by Sackett driving his coupe. As they turn the corner away from the hospital Frank

CONTINUED.

CONTINUED (2)

gives a quick look backward, and turns to Cora fearfully.

Frank
Quick! What happened?

Cora (grimly)
I stuck to my story!

Frank
Same thing here.

Cora (fearfully)
Frank, they know something's wrong. Suppose Nick dies?

Frank (thinking desperately)
That's what we've got to start figuring on right now.
(looks around behind)
I thought so. There's that cop -- and I'll lay you ten to one it's the District Attorney's car too.

Cora (frantic)
What are we going to do?

Frank (helplessly)
I don't know.
(quickly)
What did you do with that sugar bag?

Cora
I've still got it -- here in the pocket of my coat.

Frank (exploding)
In the pocket of your coat, you half-wit!
(fiercely)
If they'd arrested us back there, and searched you, we'd've been ruined!
(thinks desperately, takes out pocket knife)
Here -- cut the top open -- then give it to me.

She does so awkwardly in fierce haste while Frank keeps turning to look out the back window. Now we are sure that the motorcycle is about seventy-five yards behind, and Sackett's easily identifiable coupe close behind that.

Cora
Here.

CONTINUED:

95 CONTINUED (3)

Frank
You keep your eye on that motorcycle -- I'm going to snap these bearings out of the window, one at a time -- you watch if he notices anything.

Frank slaps a ball-bearing out to the side of the road like a marble. Cora watches tensely.

Frank
Did he slow down -- or turn his head -- or anything?

Cora
I don't think so.

Cautiously Frank snaps out another ball-bearing, then another, and Cora watches the motorcycle in the background suspensefully.

Frank
Notice anything?

Cora
Not yet --

Cautiously Frank snaps out another ball-bearing, another.

DISSOLVE TO:

96 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

It is full morning now as Frank drives the sedan in, stops it near the lunchroom entrance. Cora gets out, Frank follows her, the ball-bearing bag in his hand.

Frank (under his breath)
Watch your step now. Business as usual. Don't weaken.

Cora nods and walks as steadily as possible up to the lunchroom, unlocks the door and enters. Frank casually wipes off the windshield of the sedan with the sugar bag so as to look nonchalant as Blair swings in on his motorcycle followed by Sackett in the coupe, Frank taking a step or two toward the house, carefully timed so that he stops to turn back at the interruption.

97 TWIN OAKS LUNCHROOM WINDOW - DAY

From inside we see Cora turn to look out through the glass at the new arrivals, masking her fears under ordinary curiosity.

98 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Sackett comes up to Frank.

Sackett
It's me, Chambers.

Frank
Oh, hello, Mr. Sackett.

Sackett
I thought I'd better take a look at that fuse box — just for the record.

Frank (nodding)
I was just going to look for some new fuses.

99 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Blair (pointing off)
There — right near the top of the ladder —

Sackett starts off with Blair accompanying him and Frank following, concealing his anxiety.

100 EXT. TWIN OAKS LUNCHROOM WINDOW

Cora is watching anxiously.

101 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Sackett, Blair and Frank come up to the side of the building near the ladder. We now see that around the fuse box are blackened smears, and a feed wire is floating free, burned off. Sackett studies the situation with enigmatic face, Blair watching him closely, Frank concealing his concern.

Sackett (suddenly)
What's the ladder doing there anyway?

Frank (explaining)
This morning I noticed some insulation worn off the feed-wires — but I didn't get around to fixing it —

Blair (pointing suddenly)
Well, I'll be doggoned! Look at that!

He points down at the foot of the ladder, and the three men come closer to reveal the stiffened body of the cat, dead on the ground.

101 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (to Blair)
There's your cat --

Blair
And deader than a doornail.

Frank
That's right, remember?

Blair (agreeing)
Sure -- we were looking at her --

Frank (explaining)
She stepped off the ladder onto the bare wire --

Blair
And it killed her. Deader than a doornail.

Sackett is looking from the cat to the fuse box to Blair to Frank, his face revealing nothing.

Frank
Boy! Those fuses blew out like a cannon!

Blair
Cats are poor dumb things!

Frank (assaying a joke)
They don't know anything about electricity.

Blair (nodding)
Killed her deader than a doornail.

A pause. Sackett looks about and finally speaks.

Sackett (drily)
Yes, the cat's dead all right. Well, accidents <u>can</u> happen in the <u>weirdest</u> sort of ways. So long, Chambers.

He turns back to the car while Frank conceals his relief. Blair gives one last look, fascinated.

Blair
I never saw a prettier cat -- killed her deader than a doornail.

Blair walks back to his motorcycle, Frank smiles evenly. Sackett's car pulls off and Blair's motorcycle roars away. Frank conceals his haste as he hurries into the lunchroom.

102 INT. LUNCHROOM
As Frank comes in, Cora collapses in his arms, trembling and crying helplessly.

CONTINUED:

102 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (soothingly)
Easy, Cora -- so far we're all right --

Cora (sobbing)
But never again, Frank -- never again --

Frank (still soothing)
That's right, baby. Never again.

Cora (clinging to him weakly)
We must've been out of our minds.

Frank (agreeing)
Yes, it was just our dumb luck that pulled us through.

Cora (little girl sobbing)
It was all my fault --

Frank
Mine too.

Cora (in hysterical protest)
No, it was all my fault -- I was the one that thought it up -- you didn't want to. Next time I'll listen to you.

Frank
Except -- there won't be any next time.

Cora (still sobbing)
Never -- never --

Frank (soberly)
Listen, baby. If Nick should -- should die, they'll know. They always know. They guess it right, just from habit.

Cora (in an agony of remorse)
I'm not even what I thought I was, or I wouldn't have been so -- so scared --

Frank
I was plenty scared myself. I still am.

Cora (pitifully)
When all the lights went out I -- I was just a little girl again -- afraid of the dark --
(fervently)
From now on you'll be the -- the brains of this outfit -- and I'll work. I'll work so hard for this place, Frank --

Frank (shortly)
We can't make any plans till we know about Nick.

With a helpless little sob she collapses completely in his arms. The phone rings. He motions her to it.

CONTINUED:

102 CONTINUED (3)

Cora (shakily)
Hello — this is Mrs. Nicholas Smith — What? — Yes — Yes — Oh — Thank you for letting me know — Goodbye.
(she turns to the anxious Frank with her eyes shining through her tears)
He's going to be all right! They want him to stay there for a week — but he's going to be all right!

Frank (with a deep breath)
Thank God. Now we can breathe again for a minute.

Cora (breathlessly)
We've got a week — a whole week — to work things out---

Frank
You give me a big kiss before I sock you!

Cora (suddenly all business)
Right now it's after seven o'clock and we've got to get this place opened up for business!

She turns away, briskly, as Frank shakes his head in amazed awe and frustration. As she goes in the kitchen, she gives him a quick flashing smile of promise. The CAMERA MOVES UP on Frank's Face. For the moment he is licked. But for the moment, he smiles after her.

DISSOLVE TO:

102X1 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT - LONG SHOT

As before, a tableau of Frank and Cora running gaily down into the water, swimming way out.

DISSOLVE TO:

103 EXT. TWIN OAKS - LONG SHOT - DAY

Two huge identical busses stand in the southbound lane of the road, a third backed up close to the lunchroom entrance. All three bear signs UNITED SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC. Each bus holds thirty odd youngsters making characteristic noises.

104 EXT. TWIN OAKS - CLOSE SHOT

The picnic manager holds open the lunchroom door as Frank brings out a stack of box lunches. A previous

CONTINUED:

104 CONTINUED (2)

batch is being carried into the third bus by four Sunday-school boys.

Frank (putting down twenty boxes)
Twenty more -- makes sixty.

Manager (counting rapidly)
You all alone here today?

Frank
For awhile.

(exits into lunchroom, comes out with twenty more boxes)
Eighty. Yeah, the boss is still in the hospital and the Missus goes in to see him every morning while business is slow.

(meanwhile has stepped in and out again with more boxes)
One hundred even.

Manager (counting rapidly)
Forty-five dollars. Right?

Frank (as he counts out money)
And thanks for the business.

Manager
Don't thank me. It was Mrs. Smith's idea -- and did she give me the works!

Frank (grinning)
Let that be a lesson to you. Don't ever drop in here for a hamburger if you don't want to buy anything she wants to sell you!

Manager (pointedly)
And a swell dish too!

Both turn at the low whine of a siren as State Motorcycle Officer Blair swings in and stops, addressing the manager, who with the four boys is now getting the last of the box lunches into the bus.

Blair
Look, brother! One of us has got to do something right away -- either you got to move those busses, or I got to widen the road!

Manager (scuttling away)
Sorry, officer. We're getting right out.

He starts shooing his youngsters into the bus and waves all three drivers off. Meanwhile Blair shakes his head, mops his brow in the hot sunshine.

CONTINUED:

104 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (helpfully)
How about a nice cold drink on the house?

Blair
Nope. I gotta hurry.
(throws leg over motorcycle)
So your boss is coming home?

Frank (steadily)
Any day now.

Blair
Today, you mean.
(Frank is startled)
Sure. I passed the car coming from town, the gorgeous blonde is driving slow and careful, and the old boy has still got a bandage on his head.
(looks toward side of house)
That poor little pussycat -- killed her deader than a doornail.

He kicks the starter and whirls off, leaving Frank to make a grim and important decision. Slowly he enters the lunchroom.

105 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Frank enters the empty lunchroom, deposits the $45 in the cash register, then grimly pushes the "NO SALE" key, closes the drawer, leaving the "NO SALE" in sight, then locks the door, slides into place a sign reading "CLOSED", and crosses toward the back of the house.

106 INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Frank enters and pulls out his suitcase, looks at it reflectively.

DISSOLVE TO:

107 INT. DARK SMALL ROOM
Frank's voice and manner reflect the heartbreak of his exit from the Twin Oaks Tavern.

Frank
Five minutes later I was on my way. If I waited for them to get back, she'd try everything in the book to get me to stay, but I wouldn't have any arguments strong enough to make her give up the place and go way with me.
(he chokes up)
Before I got into L.A. I found I was -- well, I was crying -- inside -- to myself. I couldn't get her out of my mind. It kept nagging me -- if only things had been different. After a couple of weeks I started to come apart a little. I even sunk low enough to start hanging around the market where they bought a lot of their stuff, hoping I'd run into her --

DISSOLVE TO:

108-111 OUT

112 EXT. WHOLESALE MARKET - DAY

Frank is disconsolately leaning against a pile of produce crates, close to the awninged archways. Suddenly he sees a girl's legs -- surely it's Cora -- beneath an awning. She passes by one archway, another, a third. Frank decides it must be Cora and walks along the sidewalk, parallel. The fourth archway is not screened and the girl suddenly walks into sight, not Cora but a brunette. Frank is terribly disappointed, but, as the girl walks down the street she gives him an odd little look, so he suddenly shrugs and decides to make a pass at her. He follows the girl into the parking lot.

113 EXT. MARKET PARKING LOT

Madge is very well aware that Frank is following her as she swings into the parking lot and goes up to a nice convertible with the top down. But she pretends to keep her nose in the air, and even tosses her head a little bit with indifference. She slides into the car, turns on the ignition, and steps on the starter which revolves but the motor doesn't start. She kicks the accelerator pedal, pumps the primer, steps on the starter again and [illegible] as she [illegible] necessarily aware of Frank standing beside the car regarding her [illegible].

Frank (with infinite sarcasm)
What's the matter? Won't it go?

113 CONTINUED (2)

Madge (stiffly)
I've stepped on everything but it's just plain dead.

Frank
You've flooded your carburetor. Nothing you can do now but wait for a couple of minutes.

Madge (climbing out quickly)
Then I'm going to wait <u>standing up</u>. This is a hot day, that's a leather seat, and I've got on a thin skirt.

Frank laughs, and since she has climbed out on the far side he slides under the steering wheel.

Frank (meanwhile)
I'll cool off the seat for you.

CONTINUED:

113 CONTINUED (2)

Madge (leaning over far door)
Thanks.
(a glint in her eye)
Win any money in that pool game?
(Frank reacts)
Oh, sure -- I saw you in there -- long before you saw me.

Frank smiles to himself, looks down at the license strapped to the steering post (GET INSERT).

Frank (reading off)
"MADGE GORLAND - THE TIGERS' LAIR."
(looks at her)
The Tigers' Lair? What's that?

Madge
A restaurant.

Frank (surprised)
A restaurant?
(sticks out his hand)
Meet another member of the club!
(as she smiles and shakes hands)
Sometimes I think the whole of Southern California makes a living selling hotdogs to each other.

She laughs, Frank steps expertly on the starter, and in a second the motor catches, starts, and races evenly.

Frank
You see?

He stretches out his arm, opens the far door and she climbs in.

Madge (meanwhile)
You're a wonder.
(she's ready to slide under the steering wheel but he has not moved)
Come on -- slide out.

Frank reaches out and pulls her lightly down onto the seat beside him.

Frank
Listen. What do you say we turn this car around, point her south, and see what kind of food they have down in Tia Juana?

Madge (only a formality)
Oh, we couldn't do that --

Frank
What's stopping us?

As Madge pretends to debate this matter carefully, Frank is startled to hear Nick's voice.

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED (3)

Nick's Voice (ON SOUND TRACK)
Frank — Frank —

Frank turns and sees:

114 EXT. MARKET PARKING LOT

Nick has come out of the market and entered the parking lot standing beside the familiar sedan. He is waving to Frank with an odd expression on his face.

115 EXT. MARKET PARKING LOT

Frank (with false hardiness)
Ho — hello — hello, Nick.

116 EXT. MARKET PARKING LOT

Nick (with consideracle anxiety)
Frank! I've got to talk to you!

117 EXT. MARKET PARKING LOT

Frank is a little worried, wondering what Nick knows or suspects, but Nick means Cora and Frank would dare anything.

Frank
All right -- all right --
(ribbing, to Madge)
I'll take a raincheck on that Mexican food you tried to sell me.

Madge (with sudden resentment)
But it was <u>you</u> who —

Frank
Shame on you! Don't you know <u>lies</u> will get you no place?

As Madge reacts in confusion Frank slides out of the car and exits toward Nick.

118 EXT. MARKET PARKING LOT

Nick is waiting anxiously as Frank comes in, starts talking apparently under some pressure.

Nick (as Frank approaches)
Frank, first I want to tell you that I know why you walked out on me.

Frank (reacts, stalls)
Sure — the feet —
(points down)
All of a sudden the old itch in the feet.

Nick (opening sedan)
Come on — we're going to the Twin Oaks.
(putting on pressure)
Something important is going to happen tonight and you're in on it.

Frank (in a dilemma)
Wait a minute —

Nick
Listen — I won't try and make you come back to work for us — I promise.
(in sly character)
Even if the last fellow I had skipped out after three days and took the whole inside of the cash register with him.
(sees Frank hesitate)
You haven't even asked me how I am after the accident. Come on — get in — I got a lot to tell you about that.

The moment is very suspenseful as Frank tries to figure it out, fails, but climbs into the sedan, drawn by the thought of Cora.

119 INT. NICK'S SEDAN

Nick follows Frank in.

Nick
I wish you'd seen Cora's face when she brought me home from the hospital and found you'd run out on us.

Frank (carefully)
How is — Mrs. Smith?

Nick
You'll see for yourself.

Nick starts the motor.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (casually)
What is this big surprise you talk about?

Nick (stubbornly)
I don't want to talk about that -- or the business -- or Cora -- until I get you together after dinner.
(throws the car in gear)
Now, I want to tell you about my fractured skull -- the doctor said he never saw a fracture like that in thirty years of practice --

DISSOLVE

120 INT. TWIN OAKS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Frank is very tense as he follows Nick across the living room toward the hall and kitchen. Nick is still talking about his accident.

Nick
Yes, sir! I'll show you the doctor bill, receipted. That little business in the bathroom that night cost me $322.00, believe it or not.

Frank (playing up to him)
That's a lot of hamburgers.

Nick (sheepishly)
Oh I didn't figure it in hamburgers --
(characteristically)
But if I raised the forty-cent Blue Plate to half a dollar -- and left off the potatoes -- by the time I made up what I paid the doctor I'd be exactly a hundred and eight years old!
(he smiles in sheepish apology for his admitted failing, steps to the kitchen door, calling)
Cora! Look! Look what I brought out from L.A.!

Frank stops in the hall, holding himself carefully in check. Cora appears in the kitchen door. She's been working hard in the kitchen, and her white "shorts" outfit is not immaculate. She starts as she sees Frank, is thoroughly upset by his appearance.

Cora (trying to make it seem only surprise)
Oh, where did you come from?

Nick (proudly)
I found him near the market.

Frank (carefully)
Hello -- Mrs. Smith. How have you been?

120 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (carefully)
Splendid, thank you.
(a formality)
You're quite a stranger.

She is suddenly aware that she's not looking her best, tries to manage an indifferent exit.

Cora (suddenly tired and licked)
I've got work to do.
(as she exits)
I hope it was cooler in town —

She disappears into the kitchen just as a car outside toots the horn violently.

Nick
A customer!

With that Nick hurries out through the hall. Frank hesitates and walks quietly into the kitchen. Cora does not stop working.

Frank (in a low voice)
Been thinking about me, Cora?

Cora (under great strain)
I couldn't forget you that quick.

Frank
How are you?

Cora (in a low voice)
All right.

Frank
Have you got a kiss for me?

Cora (very busy)
We'll be having dinner pretty soon. You'd better get ready.

Frank can only stand there helplessly, before this mood of hers.

Frank (finally)
As a home-coming, this is the worst flop I ever saw in my life.

He cannot see — with her back turned — that her eyes are clouded with "little girl" tears. An awkward pause. He turns slowly and walks out of the room, shaky himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

121 INT. LUNCHROOM - NIGHT

Filling the screen is an X-ray negative of a fractured skull, held against a bright light, Nick's finger indicating the fracture.

Nick's Voice (ON SOUND TRACK)
Of course they took six X-ray pictures altogether -- a new one every day -- but this is the one that makes it look the worst!

The CAMERA PULLS BACK revealing Nick and Frank, Nick holding up to the light a snapshot album in a cut out page on which he has mounted the X-ray. Frank obediently surveys the X-ray with assumed interest, with a little "oh" and "ah" while Nick has been illustrating.

122 LUNCHROOM - NIGHT

The blinds are drawn in the lunchroom, no lights are burning but a single one against which Nick has been holding the X-ray. During the above action we see Cora enter from the kitchen, taking out the last of dishes and linen from one of the lunchroom tables where the trio have been eating their dinner. Her face is sullen her inward annoyance great.

Frank (taking album)
What's this -- a family album?

He turns a page idly.

Nick (eagerly)
Sure -- there's my restaurant license to do business in Los Angeles County --
(sees Frank study a picture on a previous page)
And that's a snapshot of Cora and me the day we got married! Take a good look! Wasn't she cute?

Seeing Frank study the snapshot Nick astonishingly take a step to the wall and snaps a switch flooding the whol lunchroom with bright light. Cora has entered again from the kitchen, overheard and overseen Frank and the wedding picture.

Cora (curtly)
Which one of you two is working for the electric light compan

She snaps off the main switch.

Nick (quickly)
Neither of us!
(Cora and Frank stare at him)
Turn on the light again, Cora, please.

CONTINUED:

122 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (snapping on switch)
All right. Waste your money.

Nick (with secret delight)
But when the next electric light bill comes in, I'm not going to be here to pay it.

Cora (amazed)
Not going to be here?

Nick (as the two study him)
Now you've made me tell the big surprise before I was ready
(looks from one to the other)
I'm selling the Twin Oaks.

Cora (gasping)
That's not a very good joke.

Nick (all over the place)
It's not a joke. A fellow named Stanton found out they're going to make this road into a new four-lane highway, so he's offering a big price for the place.

Frank and Cora exchange sudden panicky glances. From now on the entire scene is played importantly through the reflection of every word on them, and how this new staggering development breaks down any resistance on Cora's part, and draws Frank and Cora closer and closer in a common bond.

Frank (quickly)
But why sell when it's sure to be a gold mine?

Cora stands there stunned and helpless for a minute.

Nick (pleased with himself)
Somebody's bound to soon open up a better place across the street and put us out of business.
(turns to Cora gently and with sincere solicitude
But mainly, Cora, it's so you can stop working and take it easy.

Cora (a little incoherent)
Stop working? Where? Doing what?

Nick (with slight humor)
We're going back to live with my sister.

Cora (stunned)
Your sister? You never even told me you had a sister.

Nick (so gently)
I didn't want you to worry about her -- you see, she hasn't been very well for a great many years.

Cora (with growing tension)
But -- but where is she?

112 CONTINUED (3)

Nick
In Michigan -- she's got a little house there -- of course half of it's mine.

Cora (about to blow up)
Nick! Don't do it! Let's sit down and talk it over! Give me a chance to tell you what I think!

Frank (to help her out)
Say, what about me? You said this big surprise had me in on it!

Nick (soothingly)
In a minute, Frank. Cora comes first.
(faces Cora with quiet authority)
Cora, this is best -- and nothing will change my mind. My sister lately is paralyzed -- can't move at all -- oh she'll live a long time yet -- but she needs us to take care of her, especially you -- a woman.

Cora (growing hysterical)
Don't sell the place, Nick! Don't sell it! Please don't sell it!

Nick (with his quaint humor)
Oh, but I'm superstitious. Never turn down a good offer - you always regret it.
(half embarrassed and self-conscious)
I know you're both laughing at me, but I'm going to close the deal before something happens to it.

He hurries into the dark living room, leaving Cora crushed and Frank staggered, both wondering what to do, Cora lost in the crash of her own dreams and plans.

Frank
Maybe the sale won't go through.

Cora (to herself bitterly)
It'll go through all right.

They listen as they hear Nick's voice on the phone from the other room.

Nick's Voice (IN SOUND TRACK)
Hello? Mr. Stanton? This is Nicholas Smith. Mr. Stanton, you just bought a restaurant!
(Frank and Cora look at each other in despair)
How soon can you have the papers ready to sign -- and of course the check?

Cora and Frank look at each other helplessly, then look away from each other to listen sharply.

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED (4)

Nick's Voice (cont'd)

Sure I can come to Santa Barbara Wednesday -- and Mr. Stanton, I've located that young fellow I said would make you a wonderful manager! Sure I'll bring him along!

(Frank and Cora exchange looks -- fate is taking charge of them with a vengeance)

I sure will! Goodbye, Mr. Stanton -- till Wednesday -- 10:00 A.M. sharp!

Cora turns away, sick at heart, as Nick comes back into the room happily.

Nick

Now everybody's got something to celebrate! Frank, you'll have a first-class job, with a fine future -- and I predict, as you get along in this world, you'll lose that -- that itching in the feet.

(soberly, to Cora)

Cora, my dear, in the years to come you'll thank me for this -- and as for me, I'll have enough money to live out my days, back in the old house where I was born -- and what was good enough for my father is certainly good enough for me.

(he's so pleased that he has no idea of the tragedy he is serving out to the others)

Well, let's get a good night's sleep.

(moves toward living room door)

Come on, Cora. We'll close up early tomorrow night and drive to Santa Barbara. We'll have a nice little supper party, and Wednesday at ten o'clock sharp we'll get ourselves set for life -- all three of us --

(smiling his foolish little smile at the other two, he knocks on the wood of the doorjamb)

Goodnight, Frank -- we'll pick up your suitcase in L.A. tomorrow - come on, Cora --

As he steps through the living room door he stops a second, snaps on the living room lights and grins back into the lunchroom.

Nick

Let Mr. Stanton have a big electric light bill! He got the place too cheap anyway.

We see Nick exit through the living room into the hall and upstairs. Frank looks at Cora but she doesn't look at him or anything. She is crushed and brooding, her hands clenched tight. She walks slowly through the living room into the hall and upstairs with Frank watching her helplessly. Frank's heart is torn within him. Slowly he snaps out the light switch, then another, crosses to the living room door, snaps off that light, walks through into the hall, silhouetted a second against the hall light, and then this too goes out. Vaguely through the gloom we see Frank walk outside.

123 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

CAMERA FOCUSES on the window of Nick and Cora's bedroom, the only room lighted, all other lights out. We can't see in because of window curtains. CAMERA PANS DOWN to show Frank still dressed, fighting a heartbreaking battle with himself. He hears a sound and looks up at the window, freezing still meanwhile.

124 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Nick in pajamas is vaguely seen through the window curtains as he opens the window full. Simultaneously is heard Cora's voice. She is at a peak of rage, disappointment and fear.

125 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank listens with appropriate emotions as he overhears the argument from the bedroom grow in pace and grimness.

Cora's Voice (growing)
I tell you, Nick Smith, I won't let you do it!

Nick's Voice
I know what's best and nobody's going to stop me.

Cora (incoherently)
Half of this place ought to be mine — more than half — all of it — and I'll stop you somehow!

Nick's Voice (as to a child)
Do you remember when we got married — and I asked you to sign a little paper?

Cora's Voice (sharply contradicting)
Certainly I signed a paper — but only to give you the right to rent this place for us!

Nick's Voice (harshly)
That's what I let you think! Actually it was what they call a marriage settlement!

Cora's Voice (in horror)
Oh, Nick! You didn't do that to me!
(chokes with loathing)
Why — you thief — you cheat — you liar!

CONTINUED:

125 CONTINUED (2)

Nick (triumphant)
I'd only known you for a couple of weeks, hadn't I? It was up to me to protect that house back in Michigan — but as long as you're going to think only of yourself instead of my sister, that paper can cover the Twin Oaks too!

Frank hears Cora break down into loud hysterical sobs.

Cora
Oh Nick — Nick — Nick —

Then suddenly there is the silence betokening Cora's final defeat. Frank sees the bedroom light go out. He is shaken to the core. He turns slowly into the kitchen door.

126 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

It is pitch dark in the kitchen as Frank enters and stands there a second. Silence. Then a faint noise attracts his attention. He listens. Another faint noise. Swiftly and silently his hand moves up to the light switch. The lights blaze on revealing Cora at the far end of the kitchen, stopped stiffly in a tableau, dressed in a thin black kimono, her face white, her eyes staring at Frank — and with a long thin butcher knife loosely held — not melodramatically — in the fingers of one hand. Tableau. With silent steps Frank crosses, reaches out and takes the knife and puts it soundlessly away from her. Cora still stares at him. When she speaks it is in a strained thin whisper.

Cora
Why did you have to come back?

Frank (with the same dull realism)
I had to, that's all.

Cora
No, you didn't.
(this is complete honesty, and tortured)
I could have gone through with everything if you hadn't come back. I was getting so I could forget you sometimes. And now you have to come back. You have to come back.

Frank (agonized)
Why didn't you come away with me?

Cora (hopelessly)
Come away with you for what — to what?
(piteously)
Why didn't you leave me alone instead of coming back again?

126 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (brokenly)
Cora -- let's -- let's see if we can't figure something out.
(helplessly)
I love you, Cora -- .

Cora (in a shaky bitter whisper)
You love me -- and what do you do? You let him take me away to some miserable little dump of a town, where I'll rot my life away, waiting on him and his half-dead sister!
(a sudden switch to the "little girl " tears)
You love me -- I love you -- but what do you do? You let him take me to Santa Barbara -- and you're even going right along with us -- you're going to stay at the same hotel with us -- you're going right along in the car! Why, if you loved me, you could --

She stops suddenly short and they look at each other, absolutely motionless, as the unspoken thought in each mind is recognized in the other. Little by little, imperceptibly they move closer and closer until their faces are almost touching.

Frank (almost inaudibly)
All right --

Cora (faintly)
No --

Frank
Yes — I can't leave you --

Cora
Isn't there any other way out for us?

Frank
You were going to stick a knife in him just now.

Cora (with a deep breath)
No. That knife was for me, Frank -- not him.

Frank (in wonderment)
You love me that much?

Cora (simply)
That much.

Frank (he's decided)
We've tried every other way. I guess it's in the cards.

Cora (a little sob)
I'm no good -- I'm no good -- but I love you --

Frank (fatalistically)
We're no good -- but I love you --

The decision is made.

127 INT. LITTLE DARK ROOM

Frank's sweating face and shamed manner reveal his emotion as he continues telling his story.

Frank
Sounds pretty silly now, us trying to do something we'd failed in before. Maybe <u>because</u> we failed before, we were sure we couldn't miss this time. That other time had cured me of any idea we could pull a perfect murder. This was going to be such a <u>bad</u> murder, it wouldn't be a murder. It was going to be a regular drunk automobile accident, with liquor in the car and all the rest of it. All day Tuesday, everything Cora and I did and said was part of the plan. I had to get Nick drunk — but that was easy because Cora had made up with him, and he was so pleased with himself he was singing. Just as we got ready to leave, we had an unexpected thing happen.

DISSOLVE TO:

128 EXTERIOR TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Outside the floodlights and the sign are burning, inside only the light in the lunchroom. Parked ready is Nick's sedan with Nick jovially drunk sitting back of the steering wheel and singing "There's a Long Long Trail" <u>without stopping throughout the entire scene</u>. Frank is bringing out a couple of suitcases, puts them through the open door of the sedan into the back seat, smiling furtively at Nick's condition. Meanwhile a familiar coupe drives up and parks twenty feet away beside the gas pump, which is lighted by the "safety" light bulb. Frank stops and locks.

129 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Leaning out of the coupe is — District Attorney Sackett!

Sackett (mildly)
Closed up early?

Frank (quickly, pretending to be drunk)
Hello — Mr. Sackett —
(Frank has been stopped thus just outside the lunchroom door. Cora, all dressed up in a white outfit and carrying her polo coat, appears in the lunchroom doorway and clutches Frank's shoulder desperately from behind as she recognizes Sackett)
We're just leaving on a little trip. Can I get you something before I lock up?

CONTINUED:

129 CONTINUED (2)

Sackett (climbing out of coupe)
Don't bother. I'm on my way home, and I need a little air in a front tire. I'll get it myself.

Sackett gets the air hose, Frank steps back into the lunchroom, casually.

130 INT. LUNCHROOM

Cora (in a fierce whisper)
Frank! That's Sackett!

Frank
That makes it perfect! We'll have the District Attorney as a witness! We do our act here, instead of at the next gas station! Hop to it!

With some diffuculty Cora composes herself and goes out. Frank remains a second, turns off the switches that darken the lunchroom, the sign and all floodlights except the "safety light" at the gas pump. Ignoring Sackett, Cora walks down to Nick's sedan, Frank locking the door behind her, hurrying past Cora to confront Nick.

Frank (feigning drunkenness)
Come on now, Nick! Lemme get back of that wheel! You're too tight to drive!

Nick goes on singing gaily, but Cora whirls fiercely on Frank.

Cora
No you won't! You've had as much to drink as Nick, only you don't show it!

Frank (indignant)
Me drunk? I'll prove I'm not drunk! Listen!

With a silly grin he leans down and puts his head beside Nick's and adds a loud tenor to Nick's singing. Cora gives a little snort of anger, whirls on her heel and walks a dozen feet away, acting as if she were trying to control her temper — and incidentally bringing her closer to Sackett.

Sackett (mildly)
Hello there. They're feeling pretty good, aren't they?

Cora (angrily)
Too good to suit me! I've been telling them for an hour that I wouldn't go with them, but I'm afraid they'll start off by themselves!

CONTINUED:

NOTE: SCENES 131, 132

CUT INTO the present scenes 131 and 132 are to be closeups inside the car as per script scenes continuing through to Cora's speech "But I've always wanted to see Malibu Lake and it's only a few miles over to the other road." To this Nick answers mildly "All right, all right." - (no more) and continues his singing and drinking.

We will now CUT TO the shot already made of the sedan disappearing into the entrance of the Malibu Road and DISSOLVE TO the first miniature shot, CUTTING IN process closeup to continue the suspense of our principals, and Nick's line, "Cora, you be careful. This is about the worst piece of road in Los Angeles County."

NOTE: SCENE 133

This script number is covered by the second miniature with intercut closeups of our principals, for suspense now even tenser.

NOTE: SCENE 134

This script number is covered by the third miniature with intercut closeups for the script dialogue of Sc. 134, -- and will lead the car direct into Scene 135 which is to be shot on the set here at the studio.

130 CONTINUED (2)

Sackett (still with air hose)
They'll break their necks!

Cora (with finality)
No they won't! I'll drive myself!

She stalks over to the car.

Cora (commandingly)
Frank Chambers, you get in that back seat!

Frank (stops singing, drunkenly)
Okay, okay, let Nick drive! I'm not going to fight with you!

Resuming his tenor accompaniment to Nick, he climbs over and in the back door.

Cora (to Nick)
Move over, Nick! You can't sing and drive at the same time.

Never missing a note of "The Long Long Trail" Nick accepts this theory, slides over and Cora climbs into the car, starts the engine furiously, and the car drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

131 EXT. HIGHWAY CORNER - NIGHT

THE CAMERA FOCUSES on the typical California road intersection at the corner of the Inland Highway and the turnoff to the Malibu Lake Road. Filling the screen is the sign to that effect. The CAMERA PANS DOWN looking south to reveal -- amid typical traffic - Nick's car approaching, indicated by us hearing on the SOUND TRACK with increasing volume Nick and Frank singing "Smile, Smile, Smile".

132 INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Nick and Frank are singing drunkenly, Cora driving with great tension and suspense. The car stops for traffic and she sticks out her left hand to indicate a turn, while Frank passes Nick a wine bottle and Nick drinks with only momentary interruption to his singing.

Nick (noticing Cora)
No, Cora -- you keep straight ahead.

CONTINUED:

132 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (making the turn, petulantly)
But I've always wanted to see Malibu Lake and it's only a few miles over to the other road.

Nick (mildly)
All right, but you be careful. This is about the worst piece of road in Los Angeles County.

DISSOLVE TO:

133 MALIBU LAKE ROAD - NIGHT

This is a LONG SHOT, COMPOSITION, shooting from a high place down on the road. We see the ragged cliffs along which the highway has been chiseled. A sinister low fog coils up from the gorge beneath. Again we hear "Smile, Smile, Smile" approaching and we see Nick's car making its way around a turn, the engine laboring up the grade and "pinging" heavily.

134 INT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

Cora is driving, looks up at the windshield mirror, exchanges a signal with Frank in the back seat via the mirror.

Frank (stopping singing suddenly)
Look at that gage! She'll boil any second now! You're going to ruin this car, Mrs. Smith!

Cora
Think I'd better stop and let it cool off?

Nick (worried)
Sure — pull over and stop!
(pats her arm with drunken affection)
We've gotta save this little bus to take to Michigan.

135 EXTERIOR MALIBU ROAD - NIGHT

Cora pulls the car over near the cliff and stops it, tensely composing herself to wait.

Frank (giving a cue)
What happened to your voice, Nick? We were going good!

Nick (flattered)
Listen —

CONTINUED:

135 CONTINUED (2)

He winks at Cora and begins to sing once again that favorite song of hers. Suddenly aware of something leans his head out the car window, stops singing we hear an echo of the last few phrases.

Cora
It's an echo!

Nick
It's a wonderful echo!

Thus tempted he does a few notes of an operatic aria, ending on a high note, stops and the high note is repeated by the echo.

Nick (fatuously)
Which is the better, me or the echo?

Cora
The echo can't take your high note, Nick!

136 EXT. NICK'S CAR - NIGHT

With a fatuous grin Nick begins again to sing the theme song. THE CAMERA PANS to the back seat and down to the floor to show Frank's feet, then his hand coming in, picking up the empty wine bottle, his legs brace themselves as the bottle moves up out of the scene. A moment's pause then Nick's voice is cut off with a shrill gasp, the echo continuing the last few notes and the gasp.

137 EXT. MALIBU BEACH ROAD - NIGHT

Vaguely we see Nick's body slumped over in the front seat as Cora climbs out from behind the wheel staring at it with some terror. Frank comes out crisply from the back seat, steps on the left front running board and half in and half out of the car puts it in gear, gives it the gas and as the car starts to topple over the cliff he jumps clear. The car spins over the cliff. Frank jumps up from the ground, Cora runs over and they look down. (NOTE - Action veiled for censorship of running car off cliff --- cover in two versions.)

138 EXT. MALIBU ROAD - NIGHT

SHOOTING DOWN on the cars it rolls over and over, the headlights making patterns in the fog. It stops short only part way down the cliff, battered and half hanging over another ledge with a steep drop further

139 EXT. MALIBU LAKE ROAD - NIGHT

Frank and Cora face each other, startled.

Frank (in a swift whisper)
It'll be tough going now. Sure you can go through with

Cora (shuddering after car)
After seeing that, I can go through anything.

Frank
They'll try and break us down. Are you ready for th

Cora
I think so.

Frank
Maybe they'll pin something on us. But I don't think they can -- the way we've planned everything.

Cora
I'll handle myself all right.

Frank
You stick to your story, and don't pay any attention to what I say or do! I've got enough wine in me to cover their drunk tests -- I'll say things that are crazy -- that's to cross them up, so when I'm sober and tell it our way, they'll believe me.

Cora (shakily)
I'll remember. There's just one thing. That's us. Nothing else matters.

There is no embrace, Frank just grips her shoulders and gives her a look of encouragement, and her eyes are shining back at him.

Frank
Now we've got to get down there.

Cora
Goodbye for awhile.

Frank
Goodbye.

He takes her arm and leads her quickly, roughly down the embankment toward the car.

140 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Frank hurries Cora in to beside the wrecked car which is strangely almost upright on two wheels, half way down the ravine.

CONTINUED:

140 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (crisply)
Now we've got to muss ourselves up, so as to prove we've been in the accident —

Cora (sharply)
Look! A car's coming!

She points.

141 EXT. MALIBU LAKE ROAD - NIGHT

The lights of an approaching car come around a far turn, disappear again for a second.

142 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Cora (fearfully)
Can they see us?

Frank (with furious haste)
No they can't see us yet, but we haven't got a mark on us -- and it's too late now -- you start up to the road and begin to yell for help!

She turns out to climb up the embankment. Frank looks off after her then back up to the road where he sees the light of the approaching car come into sight again. He turns back to Nick's car, wrenches the door open, and climbs in. Suddenly the car is overbalanced and slowly starts to tumble off the embankment.

143 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Cora, scrambling uphill, hears a sound, looks down and sees:

144 FOOT OF HILLSIDE - NIGHT

The car with the lights still on crashes down toward the wash at the foot of the hill, comes to a stop.

145 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Cora screams, then sees the headlights of the approaching car on the road. She scrambles up uttering piercing shrieks.

145 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (shrieking)
Help! Help!

146 FOOT OF HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Nick's car has come to rest, terribly battered up. Tumbled out of the door is the unconscious body of Frank — behind him in the front seat vaguely seen, the inert body of Nick.

147 EXT. MALIBU LAKE ROAD - NIGHT

Cora gets up to the road and starts running to the approaching car. It stops as Cora staggers into the full light.

Cora (screaming)
Help! Help!

148 EXT. MALIBU LAKE ROAD

The driver of the car pokes his head out the window. It is District Attorney Sackett. He looks accusingly at Cora as she staggers up.

Sackett
You can stop yelling, Mrs. Smith! Sure! I've been following you! Too bad I couldn't have been closer behind.

DISSOLVE T

149 INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

THE CAMERA POINTS through the lookout window of the ambulance, through the windshield as with the siren screaming the ambulance turns down the Los Angeles highway toward the city. Then CAMERA PANS DOWN to show Frank, his head bandaged, unconscious on a stretcher in the ambulance. Slowly his eyes open. He looks about him vaguely. Then his eyes wander over to the opposite side of the ambulance and the CAMERA, PULLING BACK, reveals Nick, face down on the other stretcher. The car suddenly comes to a stop. The doors open and Frank sees the ambulance back its way into a driveway.

150 INT. AMBULANCE FROM FRANK'S VIEWPOINT

Through the open doors of the ambulance as the interne and the attendant start to slide out Nick's stretcher,

151 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

In a corner a Deputy Sheriff sits stolidly reading a tabloid. The CAMERA PANS to show Frank in bed, partial propped up, still grisly out the head bandage kept cod by a patch, the right arm in a sling but no splints.

Frank looks up as Sackett enters carrying a briefcase. The Deputy immediately exits on tiptoe.

Sackett
Hello there, Chambers. How do you feel?

Frank (wary)
I'll be all right.

Sackett (opening briefcase)
You're not very hospitable, for a patient who hasn't had a single visitor, they tell me.

Frank (acting)
There's nobody in this part of the country that much interest

Sackett (busy with briefcase)
Not even — Mrs. Smith — Cora?

Frank (sticking to his story)
What do you expect? She's only the wife of the guy I used to work for.

Sackett (oddly)
Well — she wants to see you now.

Frank crosses himself as Sackett opens the door and nods in Cora accompanied by a competent police matron. Cora too is acting out her part as agreed.

Cora (formal)
Hello. How are you?

Frank (like a servant)
Shaken up a little, Mrs. Smith.

Cora (looking)
Your arm?

Frank
It's not broken, thank you. How are you?

Cora
I missed getting hurt by a miracle.

Frank (teasing)
You look good as new.

Cora (smiling)
I was a mess until they let me have a bath, and get my suit cleaned up, and send for a fresh clothes.

151 CONTINUED (2)

Sackett (casually)
Mrs. Smith wants to straighten out something, for your own good. You testified at the coroner's inquest you were driving the car.
(quickly)
You don't have to talk if you don't want to.

Frank (as planned)
I was driving.

Sackett (to Cora)
You still insist you were driving?

Cora (anxiously)
I was.

Sackett
Where was Chambers?

Cora
In the back seat.

Sackett
Well, Chambers?

Frank (as planned)
It -- it still seems to me I was driving -- but -- the test proved I was drunk --
(great pretense of honesty)
And at that inquest I was still full of liquor and the doctor's dope -- but from what she says -- she must have been driving.

Sackett hides his satisfaction, looks at Cora.

Sackett
Anything else?

Cora (steadily)
No -- everything else was just the way I testified it.

Frank
That's right.

Sackett opens the door, nods to the matron.

Cora (as they exit)
Goodbye. Let me know if there's anything I can get you.

Frank
Thanks, Mrs. Smith.

As Cora and the matron exit Sackett faces Frank, beginning a shrewd campaign.

151 CONTINUED (2)

Sackett (quietly)
Come on, Chambers. You and that girl murdered her husband, and the sooner you admit it the better it'll be for you.

Frank draces himself, wets his lips, tries to act surprised.

Frank
I — I — you're wrong, Mr. Sackett.

Sackett (aggreeably)
How about a full confession, a quick plea of guilty, and I'll do what I can for you with the court — clemency for you.

Frank (indignant)
You're crazy.

Sackett (indicating papers)
Would it interest you to know that I've been wise to you ever since that bathtub business?

Frank (desperately)
But it was an accident that killed Nick!
(with great show of truth)
Why should I want to murder a nice harmless guy I was working for?

Sackett (easily)
A motive? Well, the girl herself, for one thing. And a nice paying business, for another.

Frank (loudly, more defiant)
That's no good, Sackett! I never wanted to be tied down to anything or anybody in my life!

Sackett (nodding evenly)
Then we'll come to the real motive. That brand new ten thousand dollar insurance policy Nick Smith took out on his life!

This staggers Frank. In his weakened condition he looks about to faint and Sackett happily, misunderstanding of course, pours a quick glass of water.

Sackett
Here — have a drink of water. You'll feel better.

Frank (recovering a little)
Insurance policy?

Sackett (thinking he's lying)
For ten thousand dollars — and he took it out the day before you came back!

Frank (still stunned)
I take my oath I never heard of any insurance policy until

111 CONTINUED (4)

Sackett (on top of him)
No? Then why did you turn white as a sheet and nearly pass out?

Frank (taunted, raising his voice)
I didn't know about any policy! You let me alone!

Sackett
You don't think I'm going to stand for that?

Frank (losing his head)
I don't know what you're going to stand for! I didn't know it! I didn't do it! That's what I stand for!

Sackett (relentless)
Getting tough? All right. Now you get it! It all started when you and Cora Smith had a great idea! Nick's had an accident, so get him to take out an accident policy!

Frank (frantic, weakening)
But I left that place before Nick got home from the hospital!

Sackett (right at him)
And two days after you came back, he got killed!
(Frank writhes helplessly which Sackett mistakes for confirmation)
Oh, you were in touch with her by phone. The day after the policy was granted, you accidentally on purpose run into Nick -- and what do you think? She'd already fixed up this Santa Barbara trip and of course just for old times sake you had to go along -- and then she had to see Malibu Lake! Wasn't that an idea now?
(Frank is weakening under the false accusations that so thoroughly condemn him and Cora)
Like to pick it up from there? No? Well, it was all planned. You crowned him from behind! Then she climbed out on the running board, held the wheel and started the car! Now it was your turn to climb out, so you could both claim you just escaped in time! But she moved too quick for you! And you couldn't quite make it! So she jumped off and you were caught and went over the cliff.

Frank (wildly)
That wasn't what happened at all!

Sackett (his big point)
How do you know what happened? You were drunk!

Frank (caught)
I mean -- I mean nothing like that happened cuz I -- that I know of!

Sackett (with great significance)
You were drunk! You even thought you were driving! You don't know what happened!

He looks at Frank who is really crazy. CONTINUED

151 CONTINUED (3)

Frank

I — I —

But he stops trying to figure what to say.

Sackett (here it comes)

Maybe you didn't have anything to do with it!

(Frank stares at him)

Maybe she did it!

(Frank can only stare helplessly, fascinated)

Listen, Chambers. She did do it.

(starts to sell Frank)

There were three people in that car, Nick, and you, and Cora Well, it's a cinch Nick didn't do it. So if you were too drunk to do it, that leaves her!

Frank (weakly)

Who — who says anybody did it?

Sackett (commandingly)

I do! Now, if you told the truth at the inquest, and didn't have any interest in this girl except as the wife of your boss, then you've got to do something!

Frank (weak and confused)

Do what? Mr. Sackett — I can't follow you — I can't —

Sackett (like a hypnotist)

You've got to sign a complaint against her!

Frank (dizzy)

Complaint?

Sackett (relentlessly)

If you were in the car, drunk and helpless, when she sent her husband over the cliff, then she tried to kill you too!

(watches Frank take this big)

You've got to do something about that, Frank —

(threateningly)

Because somebody might think it pretty funny if you didn't!

Frank (weaker and desperate)

But she couldn't have meant to kill me!

Sackett (there's no escape)

If I proved it to you, you'd have to sign a complaint, wouldn't you?

Frank (evasive)

If — if you can prove it —

Sackett (with emphasis)

You were drunk — you couldn't know what was going on, could you?

Frank (helpless)

I — I must —

161 CONTINUED (6)

Sackett
Then it was Cora who crowned Nick with the bottle, then she slid out on the running board and shot the car over the cliff!

Frank
You saying it don't make it so!

Sackett (with finality)
Yes it does! Because when I drove around the bend, the car was rolling over and over down the gully — but she was already up on the road yelling for help!

Frank takes this between the eyes, makes one last effort at recovery.

Frank (brokenly)
She — she felt the car going over and so she jumped!

Sackett (triumphant)
She jumps out of a car that's turning over and over in the air, and she has time to stop and pick up her handbag!
(Frank is frozen with fear)
Because I can testify she had that white beaded bag in her hand when she ran into my headlights screaming!
(Frank is stopped cold, it's moving too fast for him)
No, Frank, Cora wasn't in that car when it went over, but you were, because you were still in it when I climbed down to the wreck!
(there's no answer for this)
And it wasn't any nervousness on her part that sent the car over with you in it as well as Nick!
(pauses for fascinating effect)
No, she wanted that sweet little piece of property and the ten thousand dollar insurance money all for herself, instead of sharing it with you! Now are you going to sign that complaint?

Frank (hysterical)
No — you've got everything all mixed up —

Sackett (bearing down)
It's you or her! If you didn't have anything to do with killing Nick Smith —
(takes legal paper and fountain pen out of briefcase)
You'd better sign this!
(arranges the paper in front of Frank and holds the fountain pen ready)
Because if you don't, I'll know! And so will the judge! And so will the jury! And so will the guy that gives you the business in that poison-gas chamber at San Quentin — and so will the boys that bury you out there alongside all the others that were too dumb to make a deal while they still had a chance to save their necks!

151 CONTINUED (8)

Sackett (grinning)
I'll be seeing you.

Keats (as Sackett exits)
Say, doing anything for dinner tonight?

Sackett
Dinner? Seven o'clock. Same place. You pay the check And give my regards to the Missus.

Sackett nods and exits. Keats turns to face Frank who is in what might well be described as a dith...

Keats (easily)
Chambers, my name's Arthur Keats. I'm Mrs. Smith's attorney.

Frank (pathetically)
I shouldn't have signed it! But he got me going!
(pleading)
Mr. Keats, will you do something for me? Will you see Corn and tell her for me that —

Keats (with whimsical authority)
You shut up. I'll tell her what I think is good for her to know — and that's all! For the rest of it, I'm handlin this and that means I'm handling it!

Frank (subsiding)
Yes, sir — but I —

Keats
You don't count now. There were some things I wanted to as you, but since you signed that complaint, the less you know the better!
(he walks to the door, turns back)
Once more. I'm handling this, and that means whatever I do I'm handling it.

Frank (completely lost)
But Mr. Keats —

Keats
I'll see you in jail —
(a jovial smile)
Or, which is the same thing, in Municipal Court for the arraignment.

Keats exits and the CAMERA MOVES UP on Frank's despairing face.

DISSOLVE TO:

152 CORRIDOR OUTSIDE COURTROOM - DAY

Amid considerable activity Frank, now in a wheelchair and hospital attire, with a blanket around his legs, is being wheeled along by a hospital orderly, followed

152 CONTINUED (2)

by the guarding officer.
NOTE: Frank's attitude from now on must always reflect his shame and guilt at having signed the complaint. From behind we see an inefficient young man about twenty-seven hurrying through the people up alongside Frank, walking with him while he bends down to whisper in deep confidence.

White
Mr. Chambers. My name's Jimmie White. I'm your lawyer.

In astonishment Frank stares, at a signal from White the orderly stops the wheelchair.

Frank
Oh, no you're not——

White (whispering)
Yes, I am -- Mister Keats sent me. You know -- he's handling everything.
(Frank listens)
Of course since you signed that complaint, you've practically got the District Attorney as your lawyer, but Mr. Keats said I should stand by, just in case—

Frank (in a fearful whisper)
Does -- does Mrs. Smith know yet about me signing that complaint?

White (all too glibly)
No, she doesn't. But don't worry, Mr. Keats is handling it.

As Frank hesitates, indecisively, White signals the orderly and Frank is pushed through into the courtroom.

153 INT. MUNICIPAL COURTROOM - DAY

Please note this is not a trial but an arraignment, in a Municipal Court, with no jury. The Judge is in place, as Frank is brought in. Frank looks around anxiously. Several photographers begin snapping flashlights of Frank as he comes in. There is a buzz from the considerable crowd that is present. Frank is wheeled in before the Judge and sees finally, between other passing people and in spite of flashlight bulbs:

154 INT. COURTROOM

Cora, white and rigid, is sitting on a front bench with the police matron beside her. Over to one side, as the CALEMA PANS, is Kyle Sackett, police officers, jail doctor, coroner's secretary, ambulance driver and other

155 INT. COURTROOM - CLOSE SHOT FRANK

Frank tries desperately to catch Cora's eye.

156 INT. COURTROOM - CLOSE SHOT CORA

Cora's cold face doesn't move but you might suspect that her eyes caught Frank's but move away again with no sign of recognition.

157 INT. COURTROOM

During all this, an officer has been rapping for order, mildly, while persons concerned with the previous case are leaving the courtroom. Finally the Judge grows impatient.

Judge (pounding)
Order in the court! Order in the court! --

This time the court quiets down, and Frank, who has been looking about for Keats, without finding him, is nudged furtively by White. Looking at the door, Frank sees Keats enter in a hurry, come up quickly and sit down beside Cora, Keats nudging Sackett with a smile to pantomime that he is here. Sackett nods to the Judge. The Judge indicates a bailiff beside him.

Bailiff (reading from a paper)
Cora Smith.

158 INT. COURTROOM

Keats escorts Cora in front of the Judge.

Judge (from a marked file)
Cora Smith, you stand charged with the murder of Nicholas Smith --
(Keats braces himself to control her)
-- and the attempted murder of Frank Chambers. --

159 INT. COURTROOM - CLOSE SHOT

Cora staggers, knocked completely for a loop. She gasps, looks at Keats, flings a murderous look at Frank, and is just about to explode in protest when Keats grabs her arm, squeezes it, and gives her a commanding look.

150 CONTINUED (2)

Keats (whispering)
Steady! I'm handling it.
(quickly, loudly, dominating the situation)
If your Honor please! We waive the preliminary examination, since we intend to plead guilty to both charges!

If Cora was infuriated before, she is stunned now. Sackett is amazed but pleased.

160 INT. COURTROOM

Frank is also shocked and dazed, amid the confusion in the courtroom, for reporters are rushing out to phones and photographers are grabbing pictures. Meanwhile we see Cora, with Keats still holding tightly to her arm. Keats has been successful in this stratagem, which is of course to keep Cora from exploding into a protest against Frank by giving her a greater shock — shock.

Cora (desperately to herself)
Guilty?

She sways, and Keats controls her with his tight hold on her arm.

Keats (glibly, rapidly - to Judge and Sackett)
We're ready to appear in Superior Court as soon as you can file your information!

161 INT. COURTROOM

Sackett's face breaks into a grin of satisfaction. He feels he has trapped Keats and the defense. The Judge raps mildly for order.

Sackett (quickly taking advantage)
We will be prepared to arraign the defendant in Superior Court at 10.00 o'clock tomorrow.

Judge
So ordered. Court's dismissed.

As the Judge rises the confusion grows greater. White gives a quick command and the attendant starts to move Frank out. He tries desperately to catch Cora's eyes but only gets a brief glimpse of her, white, swaying and utterly furious, as the police matron takes her out. But Frank, seeing Keats in close whispered conference with Sackett, is now convinced that Keats has double-crossed them, as he is pushed out into the corridor.

162 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE COURTROOM

As Frank is pushed along he keeps craning his neck back to see Cora, gets an occasional glimpse of her through the open doors of the courtroom with the matron escorting her away, cops clearing a path, photographers flashing bulbs like mad.

163 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Frank's wheelchair is whisked around a corner by White and the attendant. No longer able to see the courtroom door Frank turns to address White but they have suddenly stopped before a door marked Counsel Room, pointedly guarded by two officers. White whispers something to one of them, they nod, White opens the door and Frank is wheeled in.

164 INT. COUNSEL ROOM

The windows are notably barred, and there are two more officers lounging there. Promptly on seeing Frank and White, they leave. Frank stares in amazement as White nods the attendant to leave. And then the door opens and Frank sees Cora brought in by the matron. She will not look at Frank but she is in an obviously murderous mood. To Frank's dismay, the matron leaves, White follows her. Frank then finds himself alone with Cora and wondering what in the world he can say. He keeps swallowing, watching closely as Cora walks around the room, keeping herself from exploding only by superhuman efforts.

Frank (finally, shamefacedly)
We've been double-crossed, Cora.
(Cora doesn't say anything, she keeps on walking around)
That lawyer, Keats -- he's nothing but a police stool pigeon.

Cora (murderously)
I've been double-crossed, but you haven't.
(with utter contempt)
I see it all now. I see why I had to drive the car, not you. I see it -- that other time -- why it was me that had to do it, not you!

Frank (in protest)
That's not so ---

Cora (jumping him)
Yes, I used to say to myself the reason that I fell for you was because you were smart. And now I find out you are smart.
(ranging around him)

CONTINUED:

164 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (cont'd)
Double-crossed! I'll say I was! You and that Keats fixed it up so that I tried to kill you too! That was to get you clear! Then you two fix it up to plead me guilty! Listen, Mr. Frank Chambers! When I get through, you'll see there's such a thing as being too smart!

The opening door silences her as Keats ambles in.

Frank (savagely)
Get out of here, you stool pigeon!

Keats (blandly)
Why, what's the matter, Chambers? I told you I was handling this. I am handling it!

Frank (murderously)
You're handling it -- only when I get out of this wheelchair and get my hands on you --

But Cora jumps in. She faces Keats in deadly rage.

161 CONTINUED (3)

Cora (pointing to Frank)
So, this man here -- this so-called man, and you — you two framed me so I would get it and he would go free!

Keats (nodding)
Now, my dear --

Cora
He was in on this mess as much as I was! And I'm going to tell it all!

Keats (unhappily)
I wouldn't do that —

Cora
He's not going to get away with it! I'm going to tell it all right now!

Keats
If you'll only just letme han-----

Cora
You handled it before! Now I'll handle it!

Tableau. Keats looks at her implacable face, looks at Frank who is equally unfriendly, shrugs his shoulders helplessly and walks out of the room.

Keats (just before he exits)
I'll tell Mr. Sackett you want to confess. You'd better wait here.

Keats exits, Cora whirls to glare at Frank, but he cannot meet her eyes. With a little snort of contempt she walks over to look out the barred windows. For a long moment Frank tries to find something to say, but can't make it. The door opens quietly and a man comes in who is obviously a plainclothesman. He carries a little portable typewriter, some paper. His name is Ezra Liam Kennedy.

Kennedy
You're the young lady who wants to make a statement?

Cora (shortly)
That's right. A statement.

Kennedy makes ready his typewriter as Cora walks over to Frank reveling in what she is going to do to him.

Kennedy.
Ready now.

CONTINUED:

164 CONTINUED (4)

Cora (looking at Frank)
This will be a full and complete confession of how —
(she pauses while Kennedy taps it out rapidly)
— of how Frank Chambers and I deliberately planned and carried out the murder of my husband Nicholas Smith.
(he types)
Frank Chambers and I are equally guilty, although it was Frank who smashed Nick in the head, before the car went over the cliff —.

As Kennedy types rapidly to catch up with her, Frank struggles with himself to find some protest but can say nothing in view of the implacable accusation in Cora's eyes. The CAMERA MOVES UP on Cora's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

165 INT. COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

The CAMERA FOCUSES on Kennedy's typewriter. He rounds out rapidly as the CAMERA PULLS BACK to show Frank sweat but impotent, and then Cora. Cora has quieted down a bit "getting it out of her system". She looks at Frank for moment, enigmatically, then turns again to Kennedy.

Cora
That's all — except I didn't know anything about that ten thousand dollar insurance policy — anyway, we didn't do it for that at all.
(she nods and turns away with finality)
That's it.

Kennedy types furiously, whips out the sheets, puts the typed pages together, crosses to Cora at the Counsel table surrounded by chairs.

Kennedy (businesslike)
Initial these pages, please.
(she initials them with her fountain pen, never taking her eyes from Frank)
Sign here —

She signs, he takes out his notary stamp, swears her, stamps the confession, signs it himself, puts the papers in his pocket and takes his typewriter and exits amid a ghastly silence. Cora gives Frank one final look of contempt and crosses to the window. She picks up the much-discussed handbag from the table, remarks now as insolently as possible the gesture of rouging her lips as she did when she first met Frank.

165 INT. COUNSEL ROOM - CLOSEUP CORA

insolently fixing her lips for Frank's torment.

167 INT. COUNSEL ROOM - CLOSEUP FRANK

More than anything else this stabs Frank to the t, with all the past it brings up.

168 INT. COUNSEL ROOM - MED. SHOT

But Cora's a little shaky, and to show her nonchalance she takes a cigarette out of her bag, lights it impudently, and then weakens a little at the misery in Frank's face. Without a word she crosses to Frank, plucks the cigarette from between her lips and puts it in his, lip rouge and all. Frank's eyes are fixed on hers — just how much does this mean? He draws on the cigarette gratefully, removes it, wipes the lipstick from his lips and rubs it from his hand onto the blanket around his legs. He turns to Cora but she has stiffened again and turns her back. The door opens suddenly. He enters mildly, closes the door carefully.

Frank (dully)
Get out.

Cora (facing Keats)
If it's the last thing I do, I'll put you out of business! There must be a law — even for lawyers!

Keats (unperturbed, but pointedly)
You know, District Attorney Sackett framed you into that confession — and you fall for it, both of you!
(sees their interest exceeds their hatred)
He planned to get you working against each other — don't you see?

The idea begins to dawn on Cora and Frank.

Cora (whirling fiercely on Frank)
He started in on you, and right away you turned yellow!

Keats (quickly condoning)
Yellow is a color you figure on in murder, and nobody figures on it better than Sackett.

Frank (bitterly to Cora)
Wayte Sackett put the fear of God in me, but you're even! You showed up with the same yellow color!

Keats quickly cuts in soothingly.

CONTINUED:

168 CONTINUED (2)

Keats (before Cora can retort)
That was Sackett's trump card.
(to Frank)
Once he tricked you into signing that complaint against her, he knew no power on earth could keep --
(to Cora)
-- you from turning on him! And so he gets you both!

Cora (exploding)
If you knew all this, why didn't you stop me from confessing?

Keats (mildly)
Oh, I tried, I tried. But nobody could have stopped you!
(Cora realizes this, naturally feels guilty, Keats picks up his advantage)
But now that you've got it off your chest --
(Keats opens the door)
Kennedy!

Frank and Cora stare as Kennedy re-enters.

Kennedy (dutifully)
Yes sir?

Keats
That confession Mrs. Smith signed -- what did you do with it?

Kennedy (blankly)
I gave it to Jimmie White to lock up in your safe, like you told me to.

Cora and Frank are astounded and confused.

Keats
That's all.

Kennedy exits and Keats faces the two flabbergasted people.

Cora
But isn't he from the District Attorney?

Frank
I don't get it! That was a plainclothes dick if I ever saw one!

Keats
He used to be a dick, but he's not a dick anymore. He's my gum-shoe man now, working for me.
(pats Cora consolingly)
Since you were due to spill the beans, I figured you'd better do it to my man rather than to Sackett's.
(they are breathless)
That's why I said we'd plead guilty -- so as to stop everything cold in that courtroom before you blew your topper right then and there!

168 CONTINUED (3)

To put it mildly Cora and Frank are snafu.

Frank (with a sudden realization)
Then the District Attorney's still got nothing against -

Keats
No, Frank. You're not even under arrest.

Cora (furiously)
Oh sure! You're free but I get tossed in for murder assault --

Keats (loudly, silencing her)
Unless --
(she stops, if only to sneer)
Unless you let me handle it.
(Cora gives a shrill derisive laugh)
Listen, my girl! We're still in plenty of trouble -- and it's because we don't know exactly what evidence Sackett's got against us!
(she stops cold for a moment)
That's better. From now on, you speak only when you're spoken to -- and try and look as young and innocent as possible under the circumstances!
(she sneers slightly but is subdued)
And remember! I'm the only hope you've got!

The door opens, the police matron appears.

Matron (to Cora)
Time's up, young lady.

She escorts Cora out, Cora a little scared by Keats' last remark, and a little afraid to look at Frank. As the door closes behind her

DISSOLVE TO:

169 INT. SUPERIOR COURTROOM

This is the Superior Court and the CAMERA DOES A PAN of the courtroom beginning with Frank as he surveys the scene. Frank is out of his wheelchair, his arm still in a sling, the plaster on his forehead smaller than yesterday. Cora is beside Keats, her face showing her terrified anxiety. It's a different judge of course and Sackett now has the distinctive file on the case. Sackett is very confident, everything he says and does being focused on Cora for its effect on her.

CONTINUED:

169 CONTINUED (2)

Sackett (right at Cora)
The people of the State of California vs Cora Smith.
(Keats watches Cora closely to handle her)
Cora Smith, you are charged in Information Number 19x527 in the Superior Court of the State of California, in two counts.
(Sackett is reading from the Information)
Count One -- murder of Nicholas Smith.
Count Two -- assault with intent to commit murder on the person of Frank Chambers.

Keats (glibly)
If Your Honor please, we waive the further reading of the Information.

Sackett (to Cora)
Are you ready to plead?

Keats (quickly)
We are.

Sackett
To Count One, murder of Nicholas Smith, how do you plead, guilty or not guilty?

Keats (dramatically)
Not guilty.

General amazement! Cora gasps, Frank stares, Keats grips Cora's arm tightly.

Sackett (astounded)
But you said you were going to plead gui---

Keats (rapidly, glibly)
If Your Honor please, my client protested her innocence from the beginning. Frankly, I didn't believe her. I thought I was acting in her best interest in urging her to plead guilty and throw herself on the mercy of the court. But in the light of later developments there is no course open to me but to plead not guilty on both charges!
(pointedly to Sackett)
Will the District Attorney consent to a brief private conference?

Sackett nods unwillingly, the Judge nods, and Keats draws Sackett aside for a whispered conference as the courtroom murmurs suspensefully.

Keats
It's a card game, Sackett. And you're bluffing. I know now that you haven't got an iota of actual evidence. Oh, you played your hand well, you gambled on getting a confession --
(he looks at Cora and Sackett looks also)
-- but do you think she looks like she's going to do any confessing now?

CONTINUED:

Keats (cont'd)
(Cora, answering Keats' look, actually ventures a tremulous little smile of confidence in her attorney and Sackett suspects the worst)
Of course, if you had locked up in your safe, what I've not locked up in my safe, it might make a difference.
(Sackett now realizes what has happened and is sunk)
But you know that no attorney can be made to disclose anything that passed between him and his client.

Sackett (sunk but stubborn)
I'll never consent to letting her off scot free.

Keats
Who said let her off? Dismiss the phoney attempt charge, change murder to manslaughter, and we'll take a plea -- provided you make a recommendation of leniency!

A suspenseful tableau as we see Sackett hesitate. Then without a change of expression he faces the Judge.

Sackett
If Your Honor please, I ask permission to dismiss the charge of attempted murder, to withdraw the charge of murder, and to enter a new charge.

Judge
Granted.

Sackett (writhing inwardly)
I am informed by the defendant's counsel that she is willing to enter a plea of guilty to the charge of manslaughter, and I feel that this plea would be in the interests of justice and satisfactory to the people.

Judge (as Cora stares, shocked)
Cora Smith, to the crime of manslaughter, a lesser offense necessarily included within the charge of murder, how do you plead?

Keats looks at Cora and gives her the works to plead guilty.

Cora (near to hysteria)
Guilty.

Keats
If Your Honor please, we waive time for sentence. We are ready for sentence now.

Judge
Cora Smith, I hereby sentence you to the State penitentiary for the period prescribed by law.

169 CONTINUED (4)

Cora sways, Frank gives a start of dismay, but Keats needles Sackett with a nudge.

Sackett (almost sullen)
If Your Honor please, I recommend that leniency be granted this defendant.

Judge
Very well. In view of the District Attorney's recommendation, the Court summarily grants probation and suspends the execution of the sentence.

Again there is confusion through the courtroom, photographers start snapping Cora who starts to sob in relief, Frank draws a huge breath of relief.

Sackett (to Keats in a low voice)
If you think I'm through with those two murderers, Arthus --

CONTINUED.

169 CONTINUED (5)

Keats (chiding)
Oh be a good loser! One hundred bucks, please.

On Sackett's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

170 OUT

171-172 EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY NEAR TWIN OAKS

In the rear of Keats' expensive chauffeur-driven limousine Keats is on the jump seat facing Cora on the back seat. Cora and Frank are sitting apart from each other, each conscious of the other, each grimly determined to reveal nothing to the other, each unfriendl and suspicious. Cora is just coming out of the complet breakdown in court. They listen in separate amazement to the astonishing revelations of Keats.

Keats
Yes, that was a beautiful murder you committed. It was so good you didn't know how good it was, and neither did I, at first, but Sackett did, all along, because he didn't have an iota of actual evidence against you.

Frank (still doubtful)
But what about her not being in the car when it went over -- and about her white handbag?

Keats (scoffing)
A car can teeter-totter before it goes over, can't it? And a woman can grab her handbag before she jumps, can't she? That doesn't prove any murder. That just proves she's a wom
(happily)
Yes, it was a card game. You two held a perfect hand. But Sackett knew no man and no woman that ever lived could play that hand if he played his cards right.
(chuckles)
Why, the other night I had dinner with him, and he nozzes m he pities me! Then I start to play my cards -- and wham! Y know the rest.

Frank and Cora are tight and reserved, each afraid to speak. They are thinking of other things now, they are still remembering what each said to the other, and how they acted against each other.

Frank (hesitantly)
You going to keep on with the Twin Oaks, Cora?

CONTINUED:

171-172 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (distantly)
I guess so.
(in a dry voice)
What are you going to do, Frank?

Frank (hesitantly)
I don't know.

173 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

The place is deserted, the CLOSED sign is on the lunchroom door. Keats' car swings in and comes to a stop. Kennedy leaps out and opens the door. Cora and Frank descend. Keats leans out, holds them at the car door.

Keats (still in his own happy world)
Just a minute! There's one other little thing -- that insurance policy.
(holds up a big official check, points it at Cora)
This ten thousand dollars you get for knocking off your husband.

Cora looks at Frank. Frank looks back at Cora. Cora looks at the check, makes no move to take it.

Keats (continuing)
Oh, sure! That's how I knew Sackett was bluffing! If the insurance company, with the smartest detectives in the world couldn't find any evidence of murder, then the D.A. couldn't. Early this morning they paid off the policy.

Cora (drawing a deep breath)
I -- I --

Keats (apologetic)
Oh, in cases like this I generally take it all.
(he studies Cora with full appreciation of her)
Oh, well -- I won't be a hog. I'll just take half. Five thousand.
(grins suddenly)
What the heck! It's once in a lifetime, isn't it? Here -- you keep it all. I don't care about ten grand. I've got ten grand.

Cora (taking check gingerly)
I -- I've been trying to figure everything out, Mr. Keats -- I still don't know what to say --

Keats (happily)
Don't say thanks -- you did me a favor. Look what I got out of it!
(holds out another check)
I won a hundred dollars from Sackett, and I made him write me

CONTINUED

Kents (continued)
a check! I'm going to frame it, right over my desk!
(yells to Kennedy in the driver's seat)
Get going, Kennedy!
(to everybody)
Will you ever forget the look on Sackett's face?

He slams the door, Kennedy drives off, Cora and Frank are again stiffly aware of each other as they turn side by side and walk slowly to the lunchroom door.

174 EXT. TWIN OAKS

There are five newspapers accumulated on the doorstep during their absence. Cora ignores them for she is looking straight ahead, fishing out the key to unlock the door. But even as Frank bends to pick up the newspapers we see a word or two of each large headline that reveals, shockingly, the press story of the murder, the trial, the outcome. Frank is shaken up by the newspapers, looks away in time to push open the unlocked door, and Cora precedes him in.

175 INT. LUNCHROOM -- DAY

As Cora and Frank enter we see that the lunchroom and living room beyond are exactly the way they were left when Cora, Frank and Nick left for Santa Barbara. Frank notices the counter with several empty wine bottles and glasses. He shudders a little. Cora notices, on a table, Nick's guitar and the open album showing the snapshot of Nick and Cora when they were married. She reacts to this. The murder is still with them both. Then Frank, without a word, crosses quietly, puts down the newspapers on the table where Cora is standing, and then exits through toward his bedroom, slowly, inevitably. Cora's eye catches the headlines, flickers from them to the snapshot album. She closes the album with sharp distaste. For a minute she stares fascinated at the guitar, reaches over and strums it once, stops the sound with her hand.

176 INT. FRANK'S ROOM

Frank turns sharply at the sound of the guitar, closes his eyes with guilt and remorse. Then he sits down heavily on the bed, wondering what he is going to do.

177 INT. FRANK'S ROOM

Frank looks up as Cora enters, stands there not looking at him. Frank makes a decision, rises without a word and starts past her out of the room with finality. She stops him at the door.

Cora (tonelessly)
I didn't say you had to go.

Within her agony Frank sits down on the bed, looks at the wall. There is a long tableau. Then Cora looks at Frank as from a distance, a new Cora, a chastened heartsick Cora.

177 CONTINUED (3)

Cora (in a very low voice)
I hate that Kents--and Sackett, too.
(she just can't understand it)
Why did they have to do what they did -- all their dirty little tricks -- me against you -- you against me?

Frank (a fatalist now)
That was Sackett's job -- and Kents had to play the same game or --

An eloquent pause.

Cora (feeling it in her heart)
I wouldn't have minded that, if they'd just let us take it together. I wouldn't have minded even if it meant -- you know. Because even then we would have still had our love for each other.

Frank (miserably)
But as soon as they started their tricks, I turned on you.

Cora (choking up)
And I turned on you, don't forget that.
(she is now writing the finish to their love story, searching for the words, eloquent in her own way without realizing it, and bringing out in Frank the same emotion and understanding -- finality)
When we kissed each other I alway felt it would be -- forever -- no matter what happened. Our -- our love is all we ever had --

Frank
Haven't we still got it?

Cora
No. We had it, and then we cracked up under it. It's like a great big airplane engine -- that takes you flying through the sky -- but when you put that engine in a Ford, it just shakes it to pieces.
(she faces Frank now in a torture of realization)
That's what we are, Frank -- a couple of Fords.
(looks up out the window)
And God is up there, laughing at us --

Frank (with a flash of courage)
Cora, let's sell this place! Let's go off somewhere else and -- and try and start fresh --

Cora
If we've lost everything here -- what makes you think we could find it again someplace else?

Frank (only a half truth)
Around here -- already -- I'm beginning to hear the sound of that -- that echo -- breaking off.

CONTINUED:

178 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (licked)
I've got to stay.

Cora (climbing stairs)
Around here there's going to be a lot of hard work, I've got ideas for this place.
(she's getting back into stride now with the old gleam in her eye)
Look at all this nice sunshine in California --
(indicates the flood of light pouring in a stairway window)
And what do we do with it? We bring people indoors -- inside a joint setup ready-made by the Apex Lunchroom Fixture Company!
(looks out the window)
I'm going to fix a place out there under the trees -- and then I'll get a license to sell nice cold beer.

From the foot of the stairway Frank looks up with a flash of bitterness.

Frank
We're in the gasoline business already, and the food business, now we've got to go into the beer business!

She leans over the stair railing and lets him have it.

Cora (with finality)
Frank, don't you ever want to be somebody? We take out a beer license! We amount to something in this world!
(she climbs to the top of the stairs then turns again, all business)
I'm going to bed now and I'm going to sleep until tomorrow morning. We'll open up the place for business at 7:00 A.M.

Frank (with bad humor)
Okay -- okay, Mrs. Smith.

Cora (calmly)
That expresses it perfectly.

She disappears as the CAMERA MOVES UP on Frank's defeated face.

DISSOLVE TO:

179 DARK SMALL ROOM

It is lighter now in the room, almost light enough for us to see what kind of a room it is, and we see a little more of the unidentified listener to Frank's story.

179 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (with bitter reminiscence)
Things stayed that way for several weeks. Sometimes we'd have a fight, sometimes I'd start drinking, but it was always the same. I had to behave myself because I didn't trust her for a minute. People started flocking out to the Twin Oaks to see what she looked like -- and then they came back because they liked the place --

DISSOLVE T

180 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Outside under the trees a small but attractive pergola-like structure has been erected. There a half dozen customers escaping the hot sun with beer and cold food. Several customers' cars are parked there. The whole Twin Oaks looks furbished up, clean, a touch of paint here and there. The CAMERA FOCUSES on Frank carrying a tray full of cold food, notably chicken salads, which he puts down on a table, turning away as Cora passes him, and the CAMERA PICKS UP CORA PANNING WITH HER. She is immaculate in a stunning little white outfit, proud and happy of her success, only a look in her eye changing her from the Cora we first saw. She carries a tray with two bottles of beer and glasses which she puts down on a table for two customers. Behind her back a customer nods furtively to his neighbor and points after Cora with a knowing look. They stare at the "bottle-murderess". She turns back, a woman customer stops her.

Customer (boldly)
Mrs. Smith, would you sign your name in my autograph album?

Cora stiffens as the woman produces a ready album and fountain pen. Cora's lips curl with contempt as, without a word, she signs her name and turns away, the woman customer sneering after her for a lack of cordiality.

181 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank has been watching this and as Cora comes by, obviously distressed, he tries to say something to buck her up.

Frank (almost timidly)
Our new chicken salad item is going like a house afire.

Cora (grateful)
That chicken salad was your idea.
(needling him up)
See what you can do

181 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (with a grin)
I've got a line on some pork that'll make better chicken salad than any veal anybody ever used.

Cora (in a sudden violent whisper)
There you go, getting too smart again! When we serve chicken salad in this place, it's always going to be made out of chicken!

Frank (in a savage whisper)
Oh shut up.

They exchange looks of distaste and Cora, vaguely noticing two customers approaching from a car, crosses over to meet them.

182 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

The two customers enter the little pavilion and are sitting down as Cora comes up, now seeing their faces for the first time. She reacts suddenly. Facing her are Sackett and Keats, characteristically.

183 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank's sullen expression, as he stands near the door of the lunchroom, switches to astonishment and fear as he sees Cora facing Sackett and Keats. Frank is worried.

184 EXT. TWIN OAKS

Cora manages a fair assumption of polite service.

Cora
Hello, Mr. Sackett. How are you, Mr. Keats? Something I -- I can do for you?

Sackett (casually)
Only some beer -- at the moment.

Keats (jovially)
You're pretty busy. Suppose I handle this table --
(rises)
You shouldn't mind me handling anything for you, Mrs. Smith!

He turns and leaves her no opportunity to do anything but walk beside him toward the lunchroom.

135 EXT. THE OAKS

At the lunchroom door Frank watches them approach, opens the door for Cora and Keats to enter, hastily pretends to be busy himself and grabs an empty glass from the nearest customer, pretending; businesslike haste, enters the lunchroom.

136 INT. LUNCHROOM

As Frank enters he sees Cora and Keats just passing into the kitchen and the door closing. Cautiously, Frank saunters over and goes into the kitchen.

137 INT. KITCHEN

Frank comes in just in time to hear:

Keats (confidentially)
-- that's all Sackett said -- "one way or another" -- maybe it doesn't mean a thing.

Frank (coming into it)
What doesn't mean a thing?

Keats (leering)
Maybe the District Attorney is going to take action -- he claims folks are talking about you two living here like this!

Cora (shrilly)
Talking about us? Hah!

Frank (with a bitter snort)
That's a laugh!

Cora gives him a quick look of annoyance.

Keats
Is it? An unmarried man and woman living here under the same roof -- why in Los Angeles once there was a bug under suspicion for murder and they couldn't pin anything else on him so they threw him in the can for a hundred and fifty-six years under the forty-seven different laws that --

Cora (sharply)
I'm ahead of you, Mr. Keats!
(she looks at Frank commandingly)
I'll handle this!

DISSOLVE TO:

133 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The CAMERA CONCENTRATES on a man's hands signing [illegible] "John X. MacHugh, J. P." to a document. The CA[illegible] PULLS BACK to see that it is the marriage certif[illegible] of Frank Chambers and Cora Smith. The CA[illegible] PULLS BACK further to show the Justice of the P[illegible] MacHugh waving the certificate to dry the ink, across the room a group of Cora, Frank, and Keats. Cora's face is artificially gay as she holds Keats' chin in one hand examining lip rouge left on his mouth from kissing the bride. She is stunning in a white outfit, her hair beautifully done. Frank, wearing a noticeably patterned necktie, is opening a quart of bourbon and pouring out four drinks, passing them out during the following dialogue. His face is strained also.

Cora (to Keats)
Oh, don't wipe it off, Mr. Keats! You look stunning in my lipstick.

Keats (nevertheless wiping)
This kind tastes good, too.
(leering at Frank)
What flavor do you call it, Frank?

Frank (nastily, at Cora)
I can't remember that far back.

Cora (answering in kind)
And as far as I'm concerned, you imagined it even then.

Frank
Oh, dry up!

Cora (rapidly, glibly)
Notice his necktie, Mr. Keats? It's his wedding present from me. I was determined he'd dress like a human being for once in his life -- but the way he wears it you'd think it was a noose around his neck!

Keats (raising his glass in a toast)
And as far as I can see, there's only fifteen or twenty reasons why you two shouldn't be happy.

And thus grimly the toast is drunk.

MacHugh (presenting certificate)
Here you are, my dear.

Cora (dropping certificate carelessly on table)
We'll paste it up right alongside our beer license!

Keats (fishing in pocket)
Oh, this came while you were getting prettied up.
(hands Cora telegram)

CONTINUED

188 CONTINUED (2)

Keets (cont'd)
I hope it's Congratulations from Sackett.

Cora begins to open the telegram with anxiety.

Frank (meanwhile, formally)
Bad news?

Cora (starting to read)
<u>You bone</u>!

CONTINUED

NOTE: , SCENES 129, 130

These scenes are to be shot at the EAST LOS ANGELES STATION starting on the station sign. If desired we can add the words "I hate goodbyes" to the end of Cora's first speech in Scene 132.

188 CONTINUED (3)

Cora (cont'd)
(looks up suddenly a hurt little girl)
My mother's had a heart attack -- I haven't been home for three years --
(anxiously)
Mr. Keats, will you drive me in to the railway station, please?

Keats (characteristically)
Leave it to me. I'll handle everything.

DISSOLVE TO:

189 EXT. UNION STATION - NIGHT

Keats' car pulls up to the curb outside the L.A. station. The door opens and Cora slides out of the front seat, Frank starts getting out of the rear door with Cora's suitcase.

Cora (curtly)
Don't get out. I'll go to the train by myself. I'd rather.

Frank (hurt)
When are you going to be back?

Cora
A week, maybe. I'll wire you.

She turns and strides into the station as if determined not to weaken emotionally before she is out of their sight.

190 INT. KEATS' CAR - NIGHT

Keats (as Frank climbs in beside him)
A blind man without a cane could see you're in a bad way.

Frank (in sudden bitter passion)
At least now I won't have to wrangle with a stubborn woman -- or fight off bad dreams -- or listen to a lot of fool people ask for the lowdown on that murder case!

Keats (sympathetically)
I know, I know. I'll run you home.

Frank (with a sudden inspiration)
Coming in we passed a place called The Tiger's Lair. Drop me off there. Maybe I can get that blonde out of my system!

As Keats nods agreeably and starts the car.

191 EXT. TIGER'S LAIR - NIGHT

This is a highclass and expensive "novelty" restaurant typical of L.A. For script purposes suffice it to say that the front is a handsome open cage occupied by tiger, pumas, etc. Beyond the rear bars of this cage is a huge plateglass window through which we can see the restaurant. The entrance is to one side, with steps leading from a parking lot. A taxicab or two will be there on call. In the first LONG SHOT Keats' car drives up and drops off Frank who, in an attitude of admiration and respect for this Madge, enters the front door.

192 INT. TIGER'S LAIR - NIGHT

The place is practically filled with well-dressed customers including a certain number of women in dinner or evening dresses. As Frank steps in the typical headwaiter steps up to him. Frank ignores the waiter, looks around, quickly sees Madge sitting with a party of men and women in the "proprietor's booth" at one side. Madge looks very smart and expensive in an evening gown. Frank starts forward but the headwaiter stops him.

Headwaiter (significantly)
Gentlemen are not permitted without a necktie.

Frank is only momentarily rebuffed, realizes there is no tie in the open collar of his white shirt. Then, impudently, he takes the menu from the headwaiter's hand, a pencil from his pocket and writes something on the menu, folds it quickly, thrusts it with the pencil into the headwaiter's hands.

Frank
Give that to Miss Madge Gorland over there — I'm a personal friend of hers.

Frank waits while the headwaiter dubiously crosses to Madge.

193 INT. TIGER'S LAIR - NIGHT

Madge takes the folded note curiously and reads it without looking up.

194 INSERT: Frank has drawn, not written:

RAIN CHECK

GOOD FOR ONE MEAL SOUTH OF THE BORDER

195 INT. TIGER'S LAIR

From Madge's viewpoint we see her look over and recognize Frank but only as if he were some distant acquaintance. She gives an almost imperceptible little shake of her head "no". Frank nods his head to invite her over to see him but again Madge calmly declines. Suddenly infuriated Frank turns on his heel and walks out.

196 EXT. TIGER'S LAIR

Frank is very annoyed as he comes out the door and walks along the bars of the cage, stopping suddenly as a puma close to the bars snarls at him viciously. He stops to look at the animal, feeling very much in the same mood himself. He starts at the sound of a voice.

Madge's Voice
That one's an outlaw. He'd kill you.
(Frank turns and sees that Madge is coming up to him. He stiffens with resentment.)
If he was people, he'd be a lunatic. It's because he can't stand captivity.

Frank (defiantly)
I can't either, so maybe I'm crazy.

Madge (with gentle reproof)
Well, it wasn't exactly sane, barging in here tonight and blithely saying "Let's go to Mexico right now".

Frank (boldly)
Wouldn't you like to?

Madge (in honest confession)
Oh, I'd like to all right. And because it's something I'm not supposed to do, I'd particularly like to. But I can't.

Frank (challenging)
Can't or won't?

Madge (with a sudden laugh)
I'll own up. Can't. It's on account of the Vice President.

Frank (with a confident grin)
I'm scared to death.

Madge (grinning back)
No, no! The Vice President of my bank. I'm trying to negotiate a loan; and my charm is working.

Frank
There's another night called tomorrow.

CONTINUED:

196 CONTINUED (2)

Madge (evenly)
There's another called Wednesday, which is the first time I'll be free.

Frank does some quick mental counting, is naturally disappointed, but can only accept or quit.

Frank (with a smile)
I'll buy Wednesday.

Madge (starting to turn away)
Then I'll tell 'em inside to expect a Mr. ---
(looks right at him)
-- let's say Mr. Smith.

There is a reaction from Frank, because this is Nick and Cora's name. He watches her for a second to see if there was any significance in the use of the word Smith, but her face reflects none.

Frank (finally)
Why say Smith? Let's say Frank Chambers
(eyes her keenly)
Does that name mean anything to you?

Madge (very wide-eyed)
Not yet. Depends on the way you act Wednesday.
(turning away again and back, points to the puma)
I'll tell you a secret. The reason we keep the outlaw out here is because he won't wear a necktie !

With a tantalizing look she hurries indoors. Frank smiles to himself. This is very promising.

DISSOLVE TO:

197 INT. TIGER'S LAIR - NIGHT

It is Wednesday night and CAMERA FOCUSES on Frank sitting alone in the proprietor's booth, and noticeably wearing that "wedding-present" vivid necktie. The headwaiter passes by and eyes him with disapproval, but Frank annoyingly adjusts his tie prominently. As the headwaiter passes, nonplussed, Madge comes in, again in an expensive evening outfit. Frank notices this as he hurriedly rises to his feet.

Frank (disappointed)
Your traveling clothes?

Madge is apparently in a great hurry and very apologetic.

Madge (confidentially)
You're going to think this is a runaround, but I can't make it tonight either

197 CONTINUED (2)

Frank leans back against the edge of the booth comfortably.

Frank (with confidence)
As long as I invested three bucks in the mocktic, I might as well wait around until you are free.

And then she suddenly relents and confesses a stratagem.

Madge (with warm approval)
There isn't any vice president of any bank ! There wasn't the other night ! It's merely that I can't be picked up in a parking lot and then dropped like a hot potato until you're ready to pull another fast one !

Frank (grinning)
Then when do we start for the chile con carne?

Madge
How's Friday?

Frank (eagerly)
Friday's okay.

Madge
I'll pick you up in my car -- where?

Frank
Where I work -- the Twin Oaks.

Madge (wrinkling her brow)
The Twin Oaks? How do I get there?

Frank (fishing out a postcard)
Here's a map we had printed for the hamburger fans.
(eagerly)
Let's get started early !

Madge (agreeing)
Around 6:00 A.M.?

Frank
You do that, and I'll take over from there.

Madge (very quietly)
When would we be back?

CONTINUED:

197 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (eyeing her)
Have you got a little bit of gypsy in you?

Madge
I was born with rings in my ears, why?

Frank (with meaning)
I was just thinking. Maybe Friday won't be long enough and Mexico won't be far enough.

He gives her a steady look but she doesn't object and Frank, quite pleased with the situation, nods shortly and goes out toward the door.

198 INT. TIGER'S LAIR

The headwaiter is on duty in the entrance as Frank comes up. With a quick gesture Frank whips off the necktie, hands it to the headwaiter.

Frank (confidentially)
Keep this handy. You might want to lend it to a gentleman.

As the headwaiter reacts Frank exits triumphantly.

DISSOLVE TO:

199 CUT

199X1 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

The clock says five A.M. Someone is banging on the door of the empty room. Frank tears in from the back, just awakened, wearing an old bathrobe. He opens the door revealing a telegraph messenger who holds out a telegram. Frank grabs it, opens it and receives some striking news. He is very thoughtful indeed.

Frank (suddenly to messenger boy)
I'll give you a buck if you'll make a phone call while I get some clothes on.
(turns toward back)
Look up a joint called The Tiger's Lair in the phone book —

As the telegraph boy enters Frank dashes into the rear.

DISSOLVE TO:

NOTE: SCENES 200, 201, 202

These scenes are to be shot at the EAST LOS ANGELES STATION, starting out on the train and PANNING OVER to the station sign. We then CUT BACK to a CLOSE SHOT of Cora getting off the train, then Frank entering the station, and space the dialogue to take them over to the parking lot and up to the U-DRIVE-IT car. To justify this new automobile without further explanation, it is necessary to importantly register the U-Drive-It sign on the license plate. As Cora and Frank enter the car we will DISSOLVE TO Scene 203.

200 PLATFORM UNION STATION

Transcontinental train is pulling in and among other passengers there alights Cora. We should be startled by the change in her. She's dressed all in black, a black dress, a black hat, black shoes, black gloves, and her expression is one we have never seen before. Suddenly she stops and looks offscene.

201 PLATFORM UNION STATION

Frank comes hurrying up from the underground passage looking about hurriedly then he sees Cora. He stops and reacts to her costume and appearance and then in gentle and considerate mood approaches her.

Frank (quietly)
Why didn't you let me know she died?

Cora (very subdued)
I didn't want to bother you with it.

A redcap indicates Cora's bag and Frank quickly takes it and tips the porter, then with the utmost thoughtfulness he takes Cora's arm as they walk toward the tunnel, Frank obviously trying to give her all possible spiritual support.

Frank (quite humbly)
I feel badly about you not letting me know.

Cora
Why should you?

Frank (simply)
You back there in Iowa — your mother dying and all — and me here having a good time.

Cora (nicely)
I don't mind that.

202 INT. TUNNEL

Frank and Cora come down the steps to the underground passage, Frank very careful and solicitous of her and Cora very obviously grateful.

Frank
I'll give you a good stiff drink when we get home.

Cora (oddly)
I don't want any.

CONTINUED:

202 CONTINUED (2)

Frank
You need a good pickup.

Cora
I'm not drinking anymore.
(it's obvious that she has something else on her mind but isn't ready to talk about it)

202 CONTINUED (3)

Cora (cont'd)
I'll tell you about it. Later.

Frank (genuinely worried)
You sound like something important happened back there.

Cora (mysteriously)
I've got a lot to tell you, Frank.
(a little girl emotion)
I think you and I are going to get along a little better from now on.

Frank (overjoyed)
Tell me! What is it?

Cora (firmly)
Not now.

Frank (impatiently)
When?

Cora
Maybe tonight -- after dinner.
(feminine jealousy)
Did you really have a good time while I was away?

Frank (stalling)
Umm -- fair -- as good as I could have, alone.

Cora (not quite smiling)
I'll bet you had a wonderful time. But I'm glad you just said that.

Frank smiles down at her. She lets a faint smile answer him for just an instant and then she settles again into that strange enigmatic but not unhappy mood. Frank is content to wait.

DISSOLVE TO:

203 EXT. HIGHWAY NEAR TWIN OAKS

A "U-DRIVE IT" car (sign on license plate) comes along from the direction of town.

204 INT. U-DRIVE IT CAR

Frank driving, Cora sitting beside him, both in the same mood as they were in the station, Cora seemingly and strangely content and Frank glowing in wonder and hope. Cora looks out through the front window and sees:

206 EXT. TWIN OAKS FROM CAR

The car is coming around the curve and Cora is seeing the Twin Oaks for the first time, this from the same angle as she saw it when walking away from it before.

206 INT. CAR ON HIGHWAY

Cora leans back and smiles.

Cora (a pleased little girl)
I'm glad you got my telegram. I almost didn't send it.

Frank
I almost missed it. It came about five — and I was asleep.

Cora (thinking only of Twin Oaks)
Haven't you had somebody in to help you with the place?

Frank (quickly)
Sure, sure. A man cook and a waitress, by the day, from that agency next door to the market.

Cora
We can let them go now.

Frank (quickly)
They're through already — I phoned the agency. Saved paying them another day.

Cora (pleased)
It'll be time to open right up when we get home.

207 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

The car pulls up into the Twin Oaks. Frank gets out and helps Cora out. She's hungry to get back into her Twin Oaks scheme of things and she hurries to the door, while Frank offscene parks the car and comes up with her bag. She has just stepped inside when Frank is stopped at the foot of the stairs. A car, not noticed before, is parked around to one side, and a man is getting out of it. It is Kennedy, Kratz' stooge, and he wears a strange sort of smile on his face. Frank stiffens and turns to face him, for there's something ominous in the air. Inside the door Cora turns and she too grows a little rigid and pale as Kennedy comes up.

Kennedy (to Frank)
You remember me?

Frank (coolly)
Sure I remember you. Come on in.

208 INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Frank and Cora, so far only wondering, move with Kennedy across to the living room door.

Frank (meanwhile casually)
How's Mr. Keats?

Kennedy (that foolish grin)
He and I had a little argument. I walked out.

Behind Kennedy, as he passes through the living-room door, Cora and Frank exchange quick looks of worry. Frank follows Kennedy into the living-room, Cora, with a quick idea, turning back into the kitchen. She can still be seen through the open kitchen door getting a couple of bottles of cold beer, two glasses and a tray.

209 INT. LIVING-ROOM

As Kennedy and Frank enter the living room Cora watches politely through from en route to the kitchen (register laundry packages of clean towels and uniforms).

Frank (carefully)
Anything I can do, just say the word.

Kennedy
I was wondering if you could let me have a little money.

Cora, entering with the tray and beer, looks at Frank and their suspicions grew.

Cora (serving beer)
I don't keep much money around, but if twenty dollars will help --

Kennedy (still his silly grin)
I was hoping you could make it more.

Cora turns from the filled beer glasses to face Kennedy, dropping all pretense. (Here Cora does the six clean uniforms gag).

Cora (curtly)
Come on, Kennedy. What is it?

Kennedy (the grin)
That paper -- the one I wrote up for you, Mrs. Smith.

Frank (sharply)
You mean that daydream she called a confession?

CONTINUED

209 CONTINUED (2)

Kennedy
Yeah. It was still in the files when I left Keats. So I took it. I was thinking maybe you'd like to get it back.

Cora (directly - hanging uniforms)
How much do you want for it?

Kennedy (grinning foolishly)
How much would you pay?

Frank (acting it out)
That confession doesn't mean a thing now -- but we might give you a hundred bucks for it.

Cora (quickly)
Sure. I'd pay that.

Kennedy
I was thinking it's worth more.
(tableau -- here it comes)
I was figuring on -- about fifteen grand.

Cora (staggered)
Are you crazy?

Kennedy (happily)
You got ten grand from the insurance company.
(they can't deny this)
All that publicity's been making you a fortune. Maybe five grand more. That makes fifteen.

Cora (furiously)
You'd strip me clean, just for that paper?

Kennedy (happily)
It's worth it.

Frank has unconsciously moved a little closer to Kennedy and the latter may see a gleam in Frank's eye for he suddenly jerks out a gun.

Kennedy (now very quiet)
Don't start anything, Chambers. In the first place I haven't got the paper with me.

Frank (receding)
I'm not starting anything.
(looks at Cora)
I guess you got us.

Cora (commandingly to Kennedy)
But you're figuring too high!

Kennedy (grinning again)
Keep talking.

Cora (in full truth)
We did get ten from the Insurance company. And we've still got it. We made four thousand, not five, out of the place -- but we've spent a couple of thousand --
(her face sobers)
I -- I had to go east -- it cost quite a lot --

Frank (quietly)
Her mother died.

Cora (recovering)
And we've been fixing up the place --

Kennedy (greedily)
All right. Ten and two make twelve. Twelve grand.

Frank (fiercely)
Not all the twelve thousand!

Kennedy (grinning)
Twelve thousand, or the confession goes to Sackett.

Cora (to Frank soberly)
We'll give it to him, Frank. It's tough. But he's got us.

Kennedy (easily)
I'll phone you at five o'clock.

(moves toward door)
That'll give you time to go to the bank and get it. At five, if you got it, I'll come right out. If you haven't got it -- Sackett.

Still keeping them covered easily he backs to the door leading into the lunchroom. This forces him to pass Cora who is standing by the table where are the two untouched glasses of beer. Cora strikes a characteristic attitude and her face lights up alluringly.

Cora (purring at him)
Okay, Mr. Kennedy. But it's too bad Frank was here. If I'd been alone, I would have talked you out of it.

Her posture and her voice make Kennedy's hungry eyes turn to her for a second. In that second she swiftly tosses the glass full of beer full in his face. Instantly Frank smashes him. Kennedy goes down, Cora grabs the gun. Frank leaps on Kennedy, drags him to his feet and hits him again. Kennedy goes down to the floor again, while Cora watches as avidly as if she were a part of the fight. (NOTE--Watch censorship on beatings.)

Frank (savagely)
Snap out of it, Kennedy, and get your friends on the phone.

CONTINUED:

208 CONTINUED (4)

Kennedy (slowly rising — bloody and battered)
I -- I got no friends in this — I'm the only one that knows about ——

Bang! Frank jumps him again and gives him another couple of wallops that reduce Kennedy to blubbering.

Frank
Going to call your friends?

Kennedy (beaten)
I ain't got any friends -- I tell you I only —

Frank hits him again. Kennedy staggers against the wall.

Kennedy
Don't hit me again! I tell you I only got <u>one</u> friend!

Frank
Get him on the phone! — Here —

As Frank takes Kennedy by the arm to lead him out, Cora deftly plucks up a bar towel from the pile of spick-and-span clean ones on the living room table. She hands this to Kennedy with a leer. Wiping the blood from his face, Kennedy permits himself to be led out into the lunchroom.

210 INT. LUNCHROOM

As Frank leads Kennedy through the lunchroom to the kitchen he nods to Cora.

Frank
Bring that phone out here, Cora.

Cora takes the lunchroom phone on its long cord and brings it out to the kitchen.

211 INT. KITCHEN

Frank motions Kennedy to the kitchen phone, then himself takes the lunchroom extension to check up. Cora stands there with the gun ready. Frank points to the kitchen phone.

Frank
There you are, Kennedy. And make it a good story.

Completely licked, Kennedy takes the kitchen phone and starts to dial, Frank carefully takes up the lunchroom extension.

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (to Cora quietly)
I'll know if he tries any funny business, Cora, and if I give you the sign --

Cora (grimly, with the gun)
You just give me the sign.

The cringing Kennedy speaks into the phone.

Kennedy
Is that you, Willie?.....This is me. Listen --
(Cora and Frank listen and watch intently, Frank giving Cora nods of approval as he listens)
It's all fixed. How soon can you get out here with it?.... Yeah, Chambers is on his way to the bank now for the dough.
(raising his voice fearfully)
Willie! Get this! He knows we got him, see? But he's afraid if she finds out he's paying all that dough, she won't let him! You get it?
(an ominous pause)
(now protesting loudly)
Maybe it sounds to you like a funny way to do it -- but I got a reason for that, Willie!.....Okay.
(Kennedy hangs up with a sigh of relief and turns pitifully to Frank)
Willie's bringing the paper here in an hour, but he's awful suspicious, and Willie's a bad hombre when he's suspicious.

Frank calmly hits him again.

Frank
That's just so you'll act right when he gets here.

While Kennedy picks himself up again from the floor Frank turns and gives Cora a quick kiss on the cheek.

Frank (aside to her)
And that's for playing along. Now, Cora, I think you'd better open up the place. Only the beer garden. We won't let anybody inside.

Cora (her eyes shining)
All right. And -- Frank --

Frank (wondering)
Yes?

Cora (warmly)
You were right -- we should have gone away from here.

She gives him a quick kiss on the cheek.

CONTINUED:

211 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (very happy)

Don't worry.

Cora (with much inner meaning)

I'm not -- now!

All business now she starts past Kennedy, blithely whips open a drawer, thrusts another clean towel into Kennedy's hands, leers at him. As Kennedy nods with pathetic gratitude, and starts to wipe the blood from his mouth,

DISSOLVE TO:

212 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's an hour later. The poor completely whipped Kennedy is leaning back in an armchair still dabbing with the towel at his battered face. Frank stands watching him carefully, on guard, then cautiously takes a quick peak out the window.

213 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

There are four or five customers in the beer pavilion. Cora once again immaculate in white uniform and turban, serving a pair of them. She looks up quickly as a long low roadster drives up and parks and out of it gets a rather unusual young man, fat enough and sinister enough to be Willie.

214 INT. LIVING ROOM

Frank turns quickly back to face Kennedy who cringes.

Frank

I think that's your friend Willie, but if it isn't your friend Willie, I'm going to give you another going over, just for luck, you ---

Frank interrupts his own speech with a sudden involuntary sneeze.

Kennedy (righteous and obsequious)

Gesundheit!

Frank gives him a sudden look of amazement then stiffens and stands on guard as offscene is heard the lunchroom door open, footsteps across the floor. Then Willie enters, Cora a little behind him -- and we must notice

CONTINUED:

214 CONTINUED (2)

another new expression on Cora's face. For the moment we are thinking it is only the tension of the situation.

Cora (oddly)
He says he's Willie.

But Willie takes only one step into the room when he sees Kennedy and grows instantly suspicious. A snarl crosses his face and his hand makes a quick reach for his hip pocket.

215 INT. LIVING ROOM

But shooting from behind Willie we see Cora has been ready and with a swift gesture of her own she takes Kennedy's gun from her uniform pocket and jams it sharply into Willie's back. Willie instantly freezes comically, but simultaneously Frank has stepped forward, smashed Willie a wallop that knocks him to his knees while Frank whirls to command both Kennedy and Willie.

Frank (snatching the gun)
All right, Cora! His pockets!

Under cover of Frank's gun Cora drops down, searches through Willie's pockets, pulls the confession from the breast pocket.

Cora (giving it to Frank)
Here it is!

Frank grabs the confession but to Cora's amazement looks at it with one swift eye while giving Cora a curt command.

Frank
The other pockets!

Obediently Cora runs through the other pockets, comes out with an envelope which she hands to Frank. Frank slides out the contents — a negative and six photostats. He sneers with contempt at the cringing Kennedy and at Willie who rises to lean against the wall holding his face.

Frank
Photostats, hunh?

Cora (in admiration)
So they meant to keep on blackmailing us?

Frank
And were dumb enough to have the copies with them!

CONTINUED:

215 CONTINUED (2)

Cautiously commanding the others with the gun he drops the confession, the photostats and the negative into the fireplace.

Frank
A match, Cora.

Cora grabs a match, runs over and lights the negative which starts the whole thing blazing nicely.

Frank (with satisfaction)
All right, gents. I'll show you out.

He waves them to the door. Willie is sullen and slow, but Kennedy is awfully anxious to please and practically leaps into place ahead of Willie as Frank escorts them out through the lunchroom.

Frank (as they exit)
And any time you're driving by, stop somewhere else. We don't even want your hamburger business!

216 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cora looks after them and as she hears the outer lunchroom door open and close she sits down suddenly, chokes up with a strange suspicion of tears. Slowly her hand goes down to her other apron pocket as out of it she takes -- the "wedding-present" necktie Frank wore to the Tigers Lair and gave to the headwaiter. This is a fantastically powerful symbol to Cora, and as her rage mounts along with her emotion she hears the lunchroom door open again, stuffs the necktie back in her pocket, and braces herself for the crisis that is coming. Frank strides in happily, not noticing Cora's expression, crosses to the fireplace.

Frank (grinding out the ashes)
Well, we did it, didn't we? That's the last of it, photostats and all.

To his amazement Cora turns on him half crying and half laughing.

Cora
No! That isn't the last of it! I got a million photostats right here in my mind! Me, I'm like Jimmy Durante!
(mimics almost hysterically)
I got a million of 'em!

Frank stares at her, convinced that all women are crazy, but patient because he believes the girl is cracking under the strain.

CONTINUED:

216 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (soothingly)
All right. You got a million of 'em! And am I mortified?

Cora's laughing-crying grows louder, she throws herself down on the couch.

Cora
A million of 'em! And just one of 'em is enough for Mister District Attorney Sackett!

Frank (still patient)
Look, Cora. If you're going to be fool enough to stick your own nose in that poison gas chamber, just to get even with me -- sure, you got a million of 'em.

Cora (with murderous clarity)
Oh no! That's the beautiful part! You didn't understand Mr. Keats at all!
(he stares as she talks on rapidly, damningly)
Once they made it manslaughter, they can't ever do any more to me! It's in the Constitution or something! Oh no, Mr. Frank Chambers, it won't bother me a bit to fix you up good!

Frank (helplessly)
Cora, what ails you anyway?

Cora (triumphantly)
This --

She plucks out the necktie and tosses it on the table in front of him. Frank reacts, is astonished, confused and then immediately frightened.

Frank (carefully)
Where'd you get that?

Cora
While you were wet-nursing Mr. Kennedy, awhile ago, your friend dropped in, outside.

Frank (pretending)
What friend?

Cora (mimicking, hysterically)
So you're an outlaw, are you? So you go crazy in captivity? And you just love Mexican food?
(Frank is sick at heart as she gloats over him)
Ha, ha, ha! I hope your broken-down black-haired sweetie brings you plenty of chili con carne up to the death house where I'm going to send you!

And with that she strides out of the room at a peak of emotional hysteria. Frank stands there helplessly for a moment and suddenly suspicious, hurries after Cora.

217 INT. KITCHEN

Frank runs in and stops short at finding Cora innocently washing a dish at the sink. She immediately understands his suspicions and sneers at him.

Cora (sarcastically)
Just washing a dish, dearie!

Frank (sarcastic too)
That's nice of you.

Cora
What did you think I was doing?

Frank
I didn't think anything.

Cora
Don't worry. When it comes time for me to call up Mr. Sackett, I'll let you know. Just take it easy. You'll need all your strength.

Thus faced down Frank turns and walks out of the kitchen carefully closing the door.

218 INT. LUNCHROOM

Frank goes back of the counter and reaches down underneath for something, whirls as Cora bursts into the door and looks at him with the same suspicion he had of her.

Frank (mimicking her manner)
Just taking something to keep my strength up, dearie.

Cora (also mocking)
That's nice of you.

Frank (as she had said it)
What did you think I was doing?

Cora (right back)
I didn't think anything.

Frank (mockingly)
Don't worry. When I get ready to skip out of here I'll let you know. Just take it easy.
(he looks at her directly and the mockery disappears)
You may need all your strength.

Cora, who was turning away, turns back and gives him a funny look. There's not a little fear in that look.

DISSOLVE TO:

219 INT. DARK SMALL ROOM

You can almost recognize the room now, and Frank's clothing, and the unseen listener. This time one suspects that perhaps there are two listeners, a second man doing something in a corner. But that's all we can see. Frank's face is in a ray of light now, dark light like the first rays of the morning sun.

Frank
That's the way it kept up all day, me following her around for fear she'd call up Sackett, her following me around for fear I'd skip. After those first few customers left, we closed the place up. In between the tiptoeing around, we'd sit in the living room, not looking at each other. Finally she went upstairs to bed. I went to my room, and I made up my mind I didn't dare sleep. But I must have slept -- because I had dreams again -- dreams about Nick -- and that echo. Then -- all of a sudden --

DISSOLVE TO:

220 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frank, fully dressed, is lying propped up on the bed, dozing despite his desire to stay awake. A faint clicking sound is heard. It arouses him gradually, then suddenly he realizes what it is, jumps up and runs out of the room.

221 INT. LUNCHROOM - NIGHT

No lights are lighted as we see through the lunchroom, living room and the hall. Frank comes running into the lunchroom, snaps on the light and spies Cora huddled off inconspicuously in a corner, the telephone receiver to her ear, and looking up at him in defiant frustration as he rushes over to her. Cora is again clad in the black outfit exactly as she got off the train, and beside her eloquently is her bag. Frank grabs the receiver and slams it on the hook, picks Cora ruefully up by the shoulder and shoves her through the living room door.

Frank (meanwhile)
Get in there! Get in there or I'll --

Cora (daring him)
Or you'll what?

The phone rings. Frank snaps off the light and runs to answer the phone, his eye on Cora who stands defiant in the living room doorway.

CONTINUED:

221 CONTINUED (2)

Frank (into phone)
Hello? Yes -- oh, hello Yellow Cab? Sure, I called you, but I changed my mind. I won't need a cab now.

He hangs up the phone and turns quickly into the living room.

222 INT. LIVING ROOM

Frank enters, brushing a rigid Cora aside, closes the door leading to the lunchroom, snaps on a light.

Cora (facing him deliberately)
Or you'll what?

Frank
Sock you in the jaw, maybe.

Cora (straight out with it)
Something else, wasn't it?
(her voice is low and deadly)
You've been lying in there, trying to think of a way to -- to kill me.

Frank (stalling)
I've been asleep.

Cora (honestly)
Don't lie to me. Because I'm not going to lie to you.

Frank (full at her)
All right, then. I was. And were you any better? You were going to duck out of here to hand me over to Sackett.
(he glowers over her)
So we're even.

Cora
Again, we're even. Right back to where we started.

Frank (a strange affecting truthfulness)
No, not quite, Cora. Because that other girl -- she didn't mean anything to me.

Cora (sarcastic)
She told me you were going away with her.

Frank (challenging)
Then why didn't I? I planned to -- and not ever come back!
(no answer)
Why didn't I? -- and never come back?
(she won't answer, turns away)
Because we're chained to each other, Cora. Ever since that night on the mountain.
(a little laugh)
We were on top of a mountain -- but it's been on top of us ever since that night.

222 CONTINUED (2)

Cora (oddly quiet)
Is that the only reason you didn't go away?

Frank
No. It was <u>because</u> of you and me.

Cora (almost pathetic)
Don't say you love me --

Frank
But I do.

Cora (fighting with herself)
But love, when <u>fear</u> comes into it, it isn't love anymore. It's hate.

Frank
Do you hate me?

Cora (turning away helplessly)
I don't know --
(she snaps on a battery radio and immediately we hear an orchestra playing)
But we've got to tell the truth, for once in our life.

Frank (nodding)
That's why I told you what I was thinking about -- lying in there.

Cora (quietly)
Frank -- I wasn't going to see Sackett tonight --

Frank (doubtfully)
Why were you running away, then?

Cora (a strange light in her face)
I told you I had something to tell you.

Frank
What is it?

Cora
I'm going to have a baby.

Frank
<u>What</u>?
(reaches for her)
Cora!

She holds him off.

Cora
No. Please. I've got to tell you about it.
(she grows inspired and lovely as she talks)
Frank, we took a life, didn't we? Now -- don't you see -- we're going to give one back. We're going to bring a new life in the world -- and maybe that'll help square us -- with ourselves -- because of what we did to Nick.

CONTINUED

222 CONTINUED (3)

Frank (softly)
It might, Cora -- it might straighten us out -- we've been all mixed up.

Cora (inspired)
Don't you see? I couldn't turn you in to Sackett! I could have this baby — and then have it ever find out I -- I sent its father into that poison gas chamber -- for murder.

Frank (a last wonder)
Where were you going tonight in that Yellow Cab, Cora?

Cora (simply)
I was just going away -- never to see you again -- only I wouldn't have gone, really -- I couldn't.

Frank
Was the -- the baby the only reason you weren't going to see Sackett?

Cora (slowly)
No --
(a strange new mood)
Frank, there's something I have to be sure about -- and I've been thinking of a way that I can find out -- once and for all -- finally, for sure --

Frank (softly)
How, Cora?

Cora (a strange look in her eyes)
Take me down to the beach -- swimming -- that place we went to the first night we talked together --

Frank (disturbed)
That's a kind of a funny thing to want to do --

Cora (in sudden passionate pleading)
Please! Please, Frank! Don't ask me questions -- take me down there to the beach -- we've been so happy there -- let's be happy again just once more -- and I promise you everything'll be settled -- one way or another -- before we come back!

Frank (anxious to conciliate her)
Well --

At this minute the radio music switches into a guitar and a man singing and Frank and Cora both are instantly and unhappily conscious of it.

CONTINUED:

222 CONTINUED (4)

Cora (a tinge of hysteria)
Turn that off!
(as Frank does so)
Get the car -- I'll put on my suit --

As Cora starts upstairs,

DISSOLVE TO:

223 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Same beach as before. The hired car parks in the same place and Frank and Cora get out. Cora has her coat over her shoulders over her bathing suit, Frank is in his trunks. Both are silent as they walk down toward the water, Frank anxiously watching Cora, hoping to match his mood to hers.

Cora (finally)
Frank, I <u>couldn't</u> go to see Sackett. It wasn't because you kept watching me. I could've run out of the house and got to him.
(very pointedly)
But no, I had my chances, and I had my reasons, and I didn't do it. So all that kind of hate and revenge is out of me.
(she stops to face him, taking off her coat)
<u>But has it all left you</u>?

Frank (humbly)
I'm trying to think of some way to prove it to you.

Cora
Maybe I know a way.
(takes a step toward the water)
Let's swim out -- way out -- until we're so tired we'll only just be able to get back.

Frank (dubiously)
There's a bad riptide out there tonight, Cora.

Cora (irresistibly)
Come on, Frank! Out there -- way out there -- I'll show you a way --

She strides into the water and dives under a wave and Frank, suddenly eager and anxious, dives after her.

DISSOLVE TO:

224 EXT. SEA - NIGHT

The surface is smooth way out here beyond the breakers. Cora and Frank come swimming along side by side. The

224 CONTINUED (2)

swims more gracefully, but is tiring. Frank is not nearly as graceful but is still strong, and watching her keenly. Suddenly she stops and Frank quickly swings around to tread water, his hand out under her arm to help hold her up.

Cora (tired, breathless)
This is far enough.

Frank (anxiously)
Tired?

Cora (smiling)
Very tired. How about you?

Frank
I'm still all right.

Cora (coughing a little, but proud of him)
I swim better than you -- but you're stronger.
(this is her greatest moment, all her whole soul comes out at last as with her face close to his, their heads side by side in the water, she makes her ultimate plea)
Frank, what I wanted to be sure of -- was whether you trust me. If you don't trust me completely -- if you don't believe I'd never turn on you again --
(with great meaning)
If you don't want me to go back with you, you don't have to. You can swim back by yourself -- I'm too tired to make it alone -- nobody'll ever know -- it'll just be one of those things that happen at the beach.

Frank (from the bottom of his heart)
Cora -- Cora! I don't want to live another minute in this world without you!
(Cora is supremely happy, looks at him in full belief, coughs and shivers a bit, and Frank is instantly practical)
Don't you say another word, honey! Just save your breath and your strength -- and I'll take you in!

Cora smiles, happy and proud. She closes her eyes and lets Frank slip one arm through her elbow, swimming back to the beach with strong and determined purpose.

DISSOLVE TO:

225 INT. U-DRIVE IT CAR - BEACH - NIGHT

Frank solicitously helps Cora into the car. She has her coat on, a towel is wrapped around her neck, her bathing cap is off, and her drying hair is blowing in

225 CONTINUED (2)

the night air. She is weak and tired but supremely happy. Frank slides behind the wheel, starts the motor. Before putting the car in gear he looks full at her.

Frank (tenderly)
Are you sure, now?

Cora (proudly)
I'm sure -- I'm sure I love you -- I'm sure we're going to b happy together --
(as if a sudden pain)
Almost as happy as if all this had come to us before -- before Nick.

Frank (tender and soothing)
That wasn't our luck, Cora -- but we'll start out now with another life --

Cora (with eyes shining)
Another life -- a <u>new</u> life.

Frank puts the car into gear and swings it around onto the road.

226 EXT. BEACH AND HIGHWAY - NIGHT

In a LONG SHOT we see the car swing around and head back toward the Twin Oaks.

227 INT. U-DRIVE IT CAR - NIGHT

Frank is settled back into driving and looks at Cora who suddenly and femininely becomes aware of her makeup. She fishes in her coat pocket for lipstick, and with a knowing glance at him lifts her head up to the rearview mirror, making up her lips with all the sensual detail that marked the same gesture on their first meeting. only there is no taunting in this, the implication is full acknowledgement of his ownership. Then she turns her face to his for his approval.

Frank
I've been waiting a long time for that kiss.

Cora
When we get home, Frank. Then there'll be kisses. Kisses with dreams in them. Kisses that come from life, not death.

Frank (happily)
I hope I can wait.

And then she realizes the [illegible]

228 U-DRIVE IT CAR AND HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Shooting from behind Cora and Frank as their lips meet and cling for a second. Ahead there is a heavy stone bridge over a culvert, and the car is upon it before Frank realizes. He jerks his head around in time to see the car inescapably close to the culvert. He one quick flash of Cora's terrified eyes staring The car crashes into the stone coping.

229 EXT. CULVERT AND HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The U-Drive It car turns over and over and crashes down off the road into the culvert, thoroughly smashed in. The battered left-hand door is wrenched open and Frank staggers out, dazed and half conscious. Then he whirls back to look through the open door.

230 INT. U-DRIVE IT CAR

The floor and seat are tilted at a high angle. Cora's hand and bare arm are seen hanging down from the seat, the fingers clutching the lipstick. Suddenly the fingers relax, the lipstick drops to the floor, it rolls down toward Frank just as Cora's lipstick had that fatal day in the lunchroom.

231 EXT. WRECK - NIGHT

Frank gives a cry of agony.

Frank
Cora! Cora!

DISSOLVE TO:

232 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

This is a regulation murder trial not an arraignment as before. Frank in black clothes sits by Keats. District Attorney Sackett is giving his final summing up.

Sackett (with deep conviction)
This man is a mad dog! A mad dog that has to be put out of the way before life in this community will be safe! This man, Frank Chambers, and the dead woman, first murdered her husband to get his estate and then Chambers murdered her so he could have it all to himself --

CONTINUED:

232 CONTINUED (2)

Keats (rising frantically)
I object! There has not been one iota of actual evidence to establish that Frank Chambers killed that girl!

QUICK DISSOLVE TO:

233 INT. DARK SMALL ROOM

Frank's face is as contorted with pain as it was at Cora's death, and in the courtroom. We see his sweating agony clearly now for it is lighted up by sunshine, but the sunshine is coming through a small barred window. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to show the new lighted death cell Frank's listener is Father McConnell, a fine figure of a priest.

Frank (finally)
The jury was out five minutes. The Judge said, in sentencing me, that he'd give me exactly the same consideration he would show any other mad dog.

Father McConnell (gently)
I see. I see.

Frank (anxiously)
Father, if the Governor commutes my sentence -- or gives me a reprieve -- you're to burn that!

Father McConnell
That was our agreement, my son.

Frank
And now Father, comes the important thing you can do for me. Do you think she <u>knows</u>?

Father McConnell (softly)
Knows that you didn't -- kill her?

Frank
After what we said in the water that night she <u>must</u> know it! But that's the awful part, when you monkey with murder. Maybe it flashed through her head, when the car hit, that I did it anyhow!
(pleadingly)
Father, do you think she knows the truth?

Father McConnell
We can hope.

Frank
Do you really believe I've got another life after this one?

CONTINUED:

233 CONTINUED (3)

Sackett (quiet and deadly)
Suppose you got a stay of execution, a new trial, an acquittal of killing Cora? Then what?

Frank (steadily)
But you can't prove anything else now.

Sackett (reaching in his pocket)
No? Last night they auctioned off the fixtures at the Oaks. The man who bought the cash register found a note in the back of the drawer —
(he takes out folded note)
He brought it to me.
(holds it out to Frank)
It's addressed to you. Cora wrote it.

As the stunned Frank reads the letter and chokes up because obviously it opens with some tender phrases, Sackett now displays great mercy and understanding, no vindictiveness, as he makes his point.

Sackett
It's a very beautiful note, Frank. Written by a girl who loved a man dearly. I imagine it was written earlier the very night she died — a note of farewell, isn't it?

Frank (brokenly)
She — she did start to run away that night —

Sackett
But since it was meant for your eyes only, therefore it has in it just enough of a confession to convict you of helping her kill Nick.

Frank looks up from the note in agony, turns away to the window, torn apart.

Sackett (continuing)
So — if you left this room because you didn't kill her, you'd soon be right back here again for helping her kill her husband.
(with a shrug)
What's the use?

Frank turns away from the window with a deep breath and a new almost stern expression of acceptance on his face.

Frank
Then -- what's going to happen to me is not because I killed her?

Sacket (helpfully)
No, Frank. For killing Nick.